2016

Freedom from Want: Famine Relief in the Horn of Africa

Christian T. Ruth
University of Kentucky, ctru223@g.uky.edu
Digital Object Identifier: http://dx.doi.org/10.13023/ETD.2016.207

STUDENT AGREEMENT:

I represent that my thesis or dissertation and abstract are my original work. Proper attribution has been given to all outside sources. I understand that I am solely responsible for obtaining any needed copyright permissions. I have obtained needed written permission statement(s) from the owner(s) of each third-party copyrighted matter to be included in my work, allowing electronic distribution (if such use is not permitted by the fair use doctrine) which will be submitted to UKnowledge as Additional File.

I hereby grant to The University of Kentucky and its agents the irrevocable, non-exclusive, and royalty-free license to archive and make accessible my work in whole or in part in all forms of media, now or hereafter known. I agree that the document mentioned above may be made available immediately for worldwide access unless an embargo applies.

I retain all other ownership rights to the copyright of my work. I also retain the right to use in future works (such as articles or books) all or part of my work. I understand that I am free to register the copyright to my work.

REVIEW, APPROVAL AND ACCEPTANCE

The document mentioned above has been reviewed and accepted by the student's advisor, on behalf of the advisory committee, and by the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS), on behalf of the program; we verify that this is the final, approved version of the student's thesis including all changes required by the advisory committee. The undersigned agree to abide by the statements above.

Christian T. Ruth, Student

Dr. Lien-Hang Nguyen, Major Professor

Dr. Scott Taylor, Director of Graduate Studies

FREEDOM FROM WANT: FAMINE RELIEF IN THE HORN OF AFRICA

THESIS

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of History in the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Kentucky

By

Christian Tyler Ruth

Lexington, Kentucky

Co-Directors: Dr. Nguyen, Professor of History

And Dr. Chamberlin, Professor of History

Lexington, Kentucky

ABSTRACT OF THESIS:

FREEDOM FROM WANT: FAMINE RELIEF IN THE HORN OF AFRICA

The United States, during both the Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan administrations, pursued humanitarian relief in the Horn of Africa and East Africa with an eye towards Cold War politics. During the Carter administration the focus was on Ethiopia and the regime of Mengistu Haile Mariam, while during the Reagan administration the United States' efforts were mainly targeted towards Sudan and the regime of Gaffar Nimeiry. In both instances, the United States was concerned with the politics of the Cold War, trying to create a more positive image of the U.S. abroad by relieving world hunger, while also propping up governments that supported U.S. interests during the Cold War against the Soviet Union.

KEYWORDS: Famine, humanitarian relief, Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, Horn of Africa

Christian Tyler Ruth_____

5/2/2016_____

FREEDOM FROM WANT: FAMINE RELIEF IN THE HORN OF AFRICA

By

Christian Tyler Ruth

Lien-Hang Nguyen

Co-Director of Thesis

Paul Thomas Chamberlin

Co-Director of Thesis

5/2/2016

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE: MAN'S MOST FUNDAMENTAL NEED

"We meet to address man's most fundamental need," Henry Kissinger asserted, as he addressed an audience of fellow statesmen at the World Food Conference.[1] Convened on November 5, 1974, the Conference that met in Rome was created to address the rising uncertainty about the sustainability of global food supplies. Earlier that year, a devastating famine had struck the country of Bangladesh, resulting in the deaths of over 30,000 people. Kissinger's speech at the Conference was a call to action for the first world, a recognition of the fact that to avert future disasters like Bangladesh world powers must begin to take the necessary precautions to shore up food supplies. Kissinger's speech harkened back to over thirty years of similar language that evolved out of the height of the Second World War. President Franklin Roosevelt's infamous Four Freedoms, established in his Annual Message to Congress on January 6, 1941, outlined the basic rights that all people had: freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom from want, and freedom from fear. The freedoms worked their way into the formation of the United Nations, and most importantly the UN Declaration of Human Rights that was orchestrated by Eleanor Roosevelt, the four being woven into the fabric of that document. The freedom from want continued to be elaborated in the following decades, as successive international meetings delineated what exactly the freedom from want entailed. The right to food, always associated with the freedom from want, quickly took on importance. In 1966, at the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and

[1] Henry Kissinger, Address to World Food Congress on November 5, 1974. http://www.fordlibrarymuseum.gov/library/document /dosb/1851.pdf#page=3

Cultural Rights (ICESC), which recognized "the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family, including adequate food, clothing and housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions" explicitly singling out food as a singular need common to all humanity. The World Food Conference in 1974 adopted the Universal Declaration on the Eradication of Hunger and Malnutrition, which asserted that "every man, woman, and child has the inalienable right to be free from hunger and malnutrition."

Yet, the United States was reluctant to wholly commit itself to these grand proclamations. The U.S. would not sign the ICESC treaty until 1979, and has to this day yet to ratify it. Despite the forceful language of the Universal Declaration created at the World Food Conference, there was little meat on the bones, as it were, of the agreement. Words could not feed hungry mouths. The freedom from want, and the freedom from hunger specifically, no matter its guise, has always been inextricably wrapped up in concerns that are less than altruistic. Humanitarian relief efforts designed to combat hunger since the Roosevelt's speech before Congress in 1941 have been heavily influenced by grand geopolitical designs. The Marshall Plan under Truman, Eisenhower's Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act, Kennedy's Alliance for Progress, these programs were not only meant to relieve the suffering of various peoples, but to influence the course of the Cold War in the favor of the United States by improving relations with allies and shoring up the socioeconomic fabric of unstable regions.

Three years after Kissinger's speech, in 1977, a new president took office. Jimmy Carter's dramatic reorientation of U.S. foreign relations around the language of human rights provided fertile ground for further complicating what exactly the definitions of

human rights meant. Hunger, however, remained at the forefront of Carter's human rights push. In the opening months of his presidency, Carter's administration focused not only on promoting the human rights agenda that would be the focus of much of his term in office, but redefining the ways in which hunger relief was doled out, making sure that he would avoid the mistakes of the past and not give aid to governments that were deemed to be stringent human rights abusers. Following in Carter's wake, Ronald Reagan took office in 1981. Although Reagan's administration cast itself as the answer to what it considered to be the failed policies of Jimmy Carter, especially in regard to the emphasis of human rights and the downgrading of the importance of the geopolitics of the Cold War, Reagan found himself entangled in the same human rights issues that Carter did, especially in regards to hunger. A common point between these two disparate presidential administrations were their attempts to combat hunger abroad, most particularly in the Horn of Africa. The Horn, a region continuously wracked by drought and famine, was of particular interest to both administrations in the framework of the Cold War. Examining how both administrations addressed famine in the Horn is an illustrative exercise, as it reveals not only the strategic Cold War interests that were part of the impetus behind hunger relief, but also shows the limits of the language of human rights in foreign relations.

CHAPTER TWO: FEEDING THE BITTER WORLD

"We cannot effectively promote multilateral diplomacy, control the proliferation of nuclear arms, defuse international terrorism…or protect our security interests in…a hungry, angry, and bitter world..." Secretary of State Cyrus Vance's testimony before a Congressional Appropriations Committee in March of 1977 encompassed the outlook of President Jimmy Carter's administration towards world hunger.[2] Increasingly "gloomy" outlooks on the state of world food supplies were wrapped up in a future that seemed destined to suffer from climate change and instability, which would be particularly detrimental to less developed nations. Such projections created an atmosphere of intense concern within the Carter administration and a desire to forestall world hunger. Less powerful nations were increasingly banding together to bargain with or force the hand of the United States in international diplomacy, and projections within Carter's administration indicated that this trend would not only continue but get exponentially worse if desperate nation-states found themselves starving.

Real fears arose about the possibility that countries, in a climate of desperation, would lash out in response to force assistance from more secure nations like the United States who had, and would continue to have, strong food surpluses. The demands from Lesser-Developed Countries (LDCs) were projected to increase if there was a period of extended food scarcity, perhaps even reaching dangerous levels of "terrorism and 'nuclear diplomacy' in order to strong-arm the United States and its allies into handing

[2] Memorandum Prepared by Cyrus Vance. New York, October 24, 1976. Foreign Relations of the United States. 1977-1980, Volume II: Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs. 207

over food, if the situation within their borders became untenable.[3] In response to what appeared to be dramatic threats to the future of world stability and in order to protect the United States' security, President Carter's administration ordered the creation of new and expanded food aid programs. These programs would facilitate the stockpiling of surplus grain and other crops that would cushion the blow if global food production levels began to drop for extended periods of time. From the onset of his presidency in 1977 these initiatives were promoted and formed as an extension of Carter's extremely human rights focused foreign policy. Carter's emphasis on human rights reflected both a desire to reorient the popular image of the United States abroad, rolling back the disapproval that the U.S. had garnered during the Vietnam conflict, and a need to create a foreign policy that was morally focused and eminently relatable to the American people.

The logistical drain of the drawn out war in Vietnam and the vitriol that was directed towards the United States' continued persecution of that conflict combined to create an international and domestic climate of discontent when Carter came into office in 1977. The United States was violating the same civil rights and standards of justice that it claimed to hold most dear, and which were used by U.S. policy makers as a way to delineate themselves from the Soviet Union. The perception of the United States abroad was at its nadir because of the blatant hypocrisy of the United States' actions in Vietnam, , and this was problematic in the global Cold War, in which having international allies was an absolute necessity in the minds of those same policy makers. Allies meant control over different regions of the world, as the United States had upheld a long standing policy of containing the spread of communism through the use of proxy governments and

[3] Ibid.

militaries around the world. Carter himself accurately summed up the post-Vietnam feeling of most American policy makers in his 1975 speech in Tokyo, saying that “with the end of the Vietnam conflict, a tremendous burden has been lifted from our shoulders."[4] There was now a major opportunity for the United States to correct international opinion, shoring up alliances and good relations in order to maintain the position of the U.S. in the Cold War.

The imperative of the United States was, above all else, to affirm global stability in the battlefield of the global Cold War, where international instability was associated with the possibility of future communist influence and, thus, a weakening of U.S. power. Internally, the American public was incredibly war-weary and dissatisfied with the way that the government had handled the conflict, and Carter needed to reassure the American people that his administration would not rely on the same kind of morally questionable actions that previous presidents had undertaken in order to prosecute the Cold War. Image improvement at home was as important as it was abroad; both of these issues relating back towards the overall need for Carter and other Cold War presidents to maintain stability and control over the situation at home and abroad.

Indeed, order was almost an addiction, as chaos was one of the greatest enemies to the parity of Cold War power structures. Unstable nations were unknowns in the games of allegiances between the U.S. and the Soviets; recently freed post-colonial nations, especially in Africa, were new players at the table of the Cold War and found themselves rapidly forced to take sides in the conflict. Attempts by some countries to retain neutrality were largely met with failure. The greatest example of this is the Non-

[4] Address by Jimmy Carter. Tokyo, May 28, 1975. Foreign Relations of the United States. 1977-1980, Volume I: Foundations of Foreign Policy.

Aligned Movement (NAM), which began in 1961 as a loose coalition of states that refused to take sides officially during the conflict.[5] The neutrality of the states that comprised the NAM eroded rapidly over time, as they found themselves pressed by the realities of the Cold War into taking sides, at least tacitly. Whether by economic or military aid, nations like India, Egypt, and Yugoslavia would undermine the neutral principles of the NAM, though the organization itself would outlast the Cold War. As true neutrality was not an actually feasible option, newly created nations, most of which fell under the LDC category (or, rather, in the Third World), attempted to play the two super powers off of one another, vacillating between supporting one or another, flipping sides if need be, in order to attain a semblance of non-alignment, or banded together to form new regional organizations like the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to try and consolidate what power they had to oppose outside influence by the United States and the Soviet Union.

The established foreign relations historiography on human rights has evolved over time, mirroring the historical evolution of actual human right principles. Early scholars such as Elizabeth Borgwardt in *A New Deal for the World: America's Vision for Human Rights* and Mary Ann Glendon in *A World Made New: Eleanor Roosevelt and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights* both trace the origins of twentieth-century conceptions of human rights.[6] Authors such as Jason M. Colby, Vanessa Walker, and William Michael Schmildi have been staunch defenders and apologists of Carters foreign

[5] Odd Arne Westad. *The Global Cold War*. (2005). 97

[6] Borgwardt, Elizabeth. *A New Deal For the World: America's Vision for Human Rights*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005; Glendon, Mary Ann. *A World Made New: Eleanor Roosevelt and the Universal Declarationof Human Rights (New York, 2001)*

policy, arguing that despite its apparent flaws there were tangible benefits to people around the world.[7] Newer works on Carter include Barbara Keys' *Reclaiming American Virtue: The Human Rights Revolution of the 1970s* and Piero Gleijeses' *Visions of Freedom: Havana, Washington, Pretoria and the Struggle for Southern Africa* which emphasizes the global connections among Carter's foreign policies by utilizing multiarchival research.[8] Carter has received special attention by foreign relations historians like these because of his revolutionary emphasis on human rights as the governing principle of his foreign policy. Studies in global hunger within the context of U.S. foreign policy, such as Nick Cullather's *The Hungry World,* have examined modernization efforts in South Asia, showing how U.S. efforts there in the 1960's had long-standing negative repercussions for the region and failed to make substantive gains in curbing hunger levels.[9]

---

[7] Jason M. Colby, "A Chasm of Values and Outlook: The Carter Administration's Human Rights Policy in Guatemala*" Peace and Change* 35:4 (October 2010); Schmitz, David F., and Vanessa Walker. "Jimmy Carter and the Foreign Policy of Human Rights: The Development of a Post-Cold War Foreign Policy." *Diplomatic History* 28, no. 1 (January 2004); William Michael Schmidli, "Institutionalizing Human Rights in U.S. Foreign policy," *Diplomatic History* 28 (January, 2004). For critics of Carter's human rights focused foreign policy, see: Glenn Mower, Human Rights and American Foreign Policy: The Carter and Reagan Experiences (New York: 1987) and Gaddis Smith

[8] Piero Gliejeses. *Visions of Freedom: Havana, Washington, Pretoria, and the Struggle for Southern Africa, 1976-1991*. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2013; Barbara J. Keys. *Reclaiming American Virtue: The Human Rights Revolution of the 1970s*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014. For more recent work on Carter and human rights see: Snyder, Sarah. *Human Rights Activism and the End of the Cold War* (Cambridge, 2013) and Strong, Robert A. *Working in the World: Jimmy Carter and the Making of American Foreign Policy*. Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 2000.

[9]Cullather, Nick. *The Hungry World: America's Cold War Battle against Poverty in Asia (Cambridge, MA, 2010).* For more on Modernization theory and the Cold War see Latham, Michael E. *The Right Kind of Revolution: Modernization, Development, and U.S. Foreign Policy from the Cold War to the Present.* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011.

Examinations of Carter's foreign policy have tended to gloss over hunger and the use of food aid, focusing instead on the theoretical origins of Carter's human rights ideology, large-scale international events like the Iranian Hostage Crisis or the Camp David Accords, and the success of using human rights as foreign policy in select cases. Geographically, a great deal of scholarship has been given to examining application of Carter's foreign policy towards regions like South America, Southern Africa, and Southeast Asia, looking at human rights crises in places such as Guatemala, South Africa, and Cambodia. While there has been an acknowledgement amongst scholars about the Carter administration's desire to use human rights to positively affect domestic and international opinion of the U.S., a serious examination of Carter's methodology in this regard has not been done. This paper will attempt to fill a gap both in hunger studies and examinations of Carter's foreign policy by focusing on a region largely neglected in the foreign relations historiography of these subjects, Eastern Africa and the Horn region, specifically looking at Ethiopia and Uganda.[10] Although the Carter administration took the long term negative effects of global hunger seriously, their hunger relief efforts were not entirely altruistic or focused on upholding stability Taking advantage of newly released documents from the *Foreign Relations of the United States* series, the paper will also examine the Carter administration's usage of hunger aid towards human rights abusers as a means to not only stave off famine related instability and disaster, but to increase U.S. popularity at home and abroad, shedding further light on what appeared to

[10] Some scholarly work has been done on the United States' role in the Horn of Africa, but it has been relegated to mostly political scientists and policy experts. See Jeffrey A. Lefebvre. *Arms for the Horn: U.S. Security Policy in Ethiopia and Somalia, 1953–1991* (University of Pittsburgh ,1992).

be a selective application of human rights by Carter, something that has been a common critique of his foreign policy.

The U.S. was fully aware of the implications of having a new crop of nations, many of them rich with people and natural resources, emerge onto the international stage during the Cold War's height. Carter's outreach towards LDCs to stave off world hunger and garner their support was not a new line of thought, though the scale of his efforts was entirely original. Earlier attempts were made by successive administrations during the arc of decolonization to woo these newly emergent nations to the side of the United States. President Kennedy, for instance, created the Peace Corps as a method of influencing LDCs by assisting their modernization efforts, and also organized the Alliance for Progress in South America, which was formed to buttress food production levels in South American nations.[11] Carter's attempts to increase food surpluses and funnel resources dedicated towards alleviating existing and future world hunger and improve the standing of the United States internationally mirrored earlier efforts. International famine had been a problem that presidential administrations were aware of stretching back to Eisenhower. In 1954 President Eisenhower created the Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act which established that surplus "agricultural commodities" would be stored and then sold to allied states to alleviate famines if needed.[12] President Kennedy created the Alliance for Progress in 1961 and a little over a decade later in 1974 President Ford tasked the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) with studying the effects of long term

[11] Executive Order 10924. March 1, 1961.

[12] Dwight D. Eisenhower: "Statement by the President Upon Signing the Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act of 1954," July 10, 1954. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project.* http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=24605

hunger on the international system.[13] The resulting NAS study was published in 1977 suggested increased amounts of resources be dedicated towards food production and nutrition research, but warned that rampant poverty would be a major contributing factor to hunger, as opposed to purely scientific or agricultural issues like chronic drought or infertile seasons. The best way to combat hunger and malnutrition worldwide would be to establish firm grain reserves to account for fallow years, expand the agricultural and economic capability of LDCs who lacked sufficient means to produce for themselves, and to provide more efficient scientific methods of producing food.[14]

By 1977, estimates of Carter's staff found that over a billion people were malnourished around the world, the greatest number of which were found in Africa, in the Sahel and Ethiopia especially. Ethiopia in particular became a point of contention because of its poor human rights record and because of the development of close ties to the Soviet Union. The Carter administration's attitude towards Ethiopia was influenced greatly by the conflict between Ethiopia and Somalia, and exemplifies how both superpowers played African nations off of one another to leverage more power by proxy in the Cold War. In July of 1977, Ethiopia was invaded by Somalia in an attempt by the Somali government to gain control of a portion of Ethiopia, called the Ogaden, which had

[13] Memorandum From the President's Special Assistant for Health Issues (Bourne) to Chip Carter, the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski), the President's Assistant for Domestic Affairs and Policy(Eizenstat), and the President's Science Adviser and Director of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (Press) Washington, June 11, 1977. Foreign Relations of the United States 1977-1980. Volume II: Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs. 670

[14] Briefing Memorandum From the Director of the Policy Planning Staff (Lake) to the Under Secretary of State for

Economic Affairs (Cooper). Washington, October 19, 1977. Foreign Relations of the United States 1977-1980. Volume II: Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs, 744.

a large number of ethnically Somali people living within its' boundaries.[15] At the time of the invasion Ethiopia had been courting Soviet aid for several years. The socialist Derg ruling body led by Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam, which had been established in 1974 when a coup ousted Emperor Haile Selassie, had been trying since it came to power to solidify negotiations with Moscow for military and economic assistance. Repeated failures to establish firm trade ties were attributed by the Ethiopian government to the Soviet's pre-existing agreements to provide similar aid to neighboring Somalia.[16] The USSR and Ethiopia moved slowly, over the course of three years, towards a closer relationship. Somali-Soviet ties, once strong, also began to unravel during this time period, as Somali leader Siad Barre lost the trust of both Moscow and, significantly, Cuba, as both countries began to doubt Barre's commitment to the socialist cause and Somalia's ties to the U.S.[17] Cuban dictator Fidel Castro had already begun to throw around his authority in Africa, most recently by assisting in the 1975 Angolan revolution by sending tens of thousands of troops to ensure the socialist rebels' victory. Mengistu entreated both Havana and Moscow for aid following the Somali invasion, hoping that fellow socialist nations would come to Ethiopia's rescue, desiring a repeat of Castro's willingness to support Angola's socialist revolutionaries.[18]

The initial invasion was disastrous for the Ethiopian government, as they rapidly lost ground to the Somalis, and both the USSR and Cuba refused to send the levels of military assistance needed to hold off Barre's forces. The Somali forces eventually thrust

[15] Gebu Tareke. "The Ethiopia War of 1977 Revisted". The International Journal of African Historical Studies. Vol. 33, No.3 (2000).

[16] Odd Arne Westad. *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005. 268.

[17] Ibid., 275-6.

[18] Ibid., 275-7.

far enough into Ethiopia to threaten the capital of Addis Ababa, forcing Cuba and the Soviets to send a large amount of military aid, consisting of over ten thousand Cuban troops, six thousand advisers, and $1 billion of military supplies that allowed the Ethiopians to push the Somalis back.[19] In his assault, Siad Barre had revoked his promise to the Soviets that he would not advance into Ethiopia to take the Ogaden, causing the USSR to dissolve the existing arms agreement with the Somali government and formally declared itself on the side of the Ethiopians.

Mengistu had already begun to cement his alliance with the USSR in April of 1977 when he shuttered several major U.S. government and military buildings within Ethiopia's borders, demanding that their personnel return to the United States. When the Soviets declared the Somali arms agreement void, Barre cut ties with both Moscow and Havana, expelling their personnel and shuttering their military stations within Somalia's borders, mirroring Mengistu's own actions months earlier towards the U.S. The USSR's actions in Ethiopia and Somalia illustrated their own desires to gain influence in Africa, improving relations with newly independent African nations by fostering the ability of these states to remain sovereign and secure, even from one another, and providing much desired military and economic aid. Arab nations allied with the United States were publically supporting Somalia's invasion, while the majority of African nations supported Ethiopia.[20] In the instance of Ethiopia-Somalia conflict, the United States found itself on the side of the unpopular aggressor by not strenuously arguing against Barre in the public

[19] Ibid.

[20] Memorandum of Conversation. Moscow, March 28, 1977, 5:30–7:45 p.m. Foreign Relations of the United States 1977-1980 Volume IV, 72

sphere and providing him small amounts of assistance.[21] Carter attempted to turn public relations around after the debacle by emphasizing the fact the USSR was a major arms dealer to both sides of the conflict and arguing in a press conference that Moscow ought to cease influxes of weapons that perpetuated the conflict.[22] Carter had no desire to see the Soviets gain more popularity in Africa than they already had, and struggled to find a way to temper their increased influence in the continent.

Throughout Carter's presidency, economic aid sent to Ethiopia was revisited again and again as the flagrant violations of human rights within the country, such as mass executions by the Ethiopian government under Mengistu, became more public.[23] Mengistu's overtly anti-American actions were considered by Carter's administration to be both a backlash to criticisms leveled by the U.S. against Mengistu's atrocious human rights record and a desire to knit closer relations with the USSR.[24] Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) findings earlier that year found that the Ethiopian government felt that it was being targeted by the United States in international forums for its alleged human rights violations.[25] Multiple loans by the U.S. to Ethiopia were reviewed and eventually abstained from in international forums like the International Financial Institutions (IFI, which include organizations such as the International Monetary Fund and World Bank). Additionally, military and security aid given to Ethiopia was cut, the nation's human

[21] Paper Prepared by Professor William E. Griffith. Undated. Foreign Relations of the United States 1977-1980 Volume VI, 271

[22] Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to the Cabinet. Washington, undated. Foreign Relations of the united Stated 1977-1980 Volume I: Foundations of Foreign Policy, 388

[23] Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National. Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter. Washington, May 19, 1977Foreign Relations of the United States 1977-1980. Volume II: Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs, 137.

[24] Ibid., 132.

[25] Ibid., 68.

rights violations and the uncertainty of its relations to the Soviets the cited reason.[26] Because of obvious antagonism by the United States towards his government and the impending slashes in aid, Mengistu had been and continued to pursue arms deals with his communist allies.[27]

Significantly, despite the cuts to military aid to Ethiopia, the United States continued to funnel food aid to the nation both explicitly and through various groups. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), for instance, preemptively supplied the beleaguered Ethiopia in 1978 with over 10,000 tons of cereal when international donors were unable to meet the demands of its hungry population in time because the donor's food imports were reportedly rotting in the nation's ship clogged major harbor.[28] Over the course of 1979-81, the United States supplied over 1.4 million metric tons of food for nations in East Africa, two thirds of which went to Ethiopia and Somalia alone as they were the most in need. Ethiopia was, and continues to be, a poor region for agriculture. Only small portions of Ethiopia are arable, and even fewer were irrigated at the time.[29]

The fact that the United States scaled back its military and economic aid to Ethiopia is not especially surprising. An anti-U.S. nation that favored socialism and close-knit ties with the USSR losing military aid during the Cold War makes sense. More broadly, however, the U.S. had to maintain its established position on assistance given to

---

[26] Ibid., 113, 38.

[27] "Record of Conversation with the Ambassador of Cuba in Ethiopia, Jose Peres Novoa," from the journal of A.P. Ratanov, February 10, 1977. The Carter-Brezhnev Project. http://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/carterbrezhnev/global_competition_ebb.html

[28] Ibid., 820.

[29] Aschale Dagnachews Siyoum, Dorothea Hilhorst, Gerrit-Jan Van Uffelen. “Food Aid and Dependency Syndrome in Ethiopia: Local Perceptions”. *Journal of Humanitarian Assistance* (2012). http://sites.tufts.edu/jha/archives/1754

Ethiopia or else appear to be waffling and correcting their earlier support of the territorially aggressive Somalis.[30] What is important is both the continuation of food aid to the poor African country and what other forms of economic assistance were cut. Aside from military and police aid, money that was to be sent over for irrigation and road construction was also removed after eventual deliberation. The dialogue within Carter's administration over debates between keeping "agricultural irrigation" funding and nixing "rural roads" is revealing.[31] A National Security Council (NSC) staff member in 1977 remarked that "the distinction" between the two funding choices "escapes me."[32] Irrigation in Ethiopia was remarkably poor, and necessary for what subsistence agriculture that could be eked out of the land; simultaneously, the nation's road system was in desperate need of modernization, particularly in rural areas. Ostensibly, within the framework of Carter's human rights focused foreign policy both of these issues would acceptably fall under improving the human condition of the people of Ethiopia, however they ran aground of one of the main critiques of Carter's foreign policy: vagueness. There was an absence of a clear definition of human rights and how it should be applied to specific countries, and there were few clear-cut distinctions inherent in Carter's stated policies. In the case of the annoyed NSC staffer, she was wondering how "human needs" projects like irrigation and road building met a set of minimum criteria in order to determine if funding would be given. Such criteria did not truly exist.[33] Laws on the books that governed how aid would be distributed to foreign nations were flexible, and

[30] Gebru Tareke. "The Ethiopia-Somalia War of 1977 Revisited." *The International Journal of African Historical Studies,* Vol. 33, No. 3 (2000), pp. 635-667

[31] Ibid., 123.

[32] Ibid.

[33] Ibid.

ultimately the final decision on whether aid would be given was at the discretion of the President.[34] So long as the he felt that the aid would "be channeled to the needy" the President could ignore the labeling of nations as "gross and consistent violators of human rights" which technically disqualified them for aid packages.[35]

Although actual food aid continued to be given to Ethiopia, the kinds of substantive, long term investments in the nation, things like irrigation and road construction, were completely cut after the war with Somalia began and would remain so until Mengistu was forced out of office in 1992.[36] Years after the staffer's memo, in 1980, the United States would be supplying a million plus metric tons of annual food aid to the famine wracked East African nation, even as the U.S. refused to send any other form of economic or developmental assistance.[37] The complaints of the staffer, who later wondered almost despairingly about the undefined nature of tracking human rights violators, were never resolved; "I know we should maintain flexibility...but our internal discussions should not be fuzzy."[38] What was not "fuzzy" was hunger relief. Food was easily understandable in the public mind and it was a simple thing to claim to the world and the American people that the government of the United States had given literal tons of food assistance to underdeveloped and hungry nations around the world, as few would

---

[34] Memorandum From the Special Representative for Economic. Summits (Owen) to President Carter. Washington, December 28, 1977. Foreign Relations of the United States 1977-1980 Volume III: Foreign Economic Policy, 290.

[35] Ibid.

[36] *USAID* http://www.usaid.gov/ethiopia/history-usaid-ethiopia

[37] Memorandum From the Special Representative for Economic. Summits (Owen) to President Carter. Washington, January 10, 1980. Foreign Relations of the United States 1977-1980. Volume III: Foreign Economic Policy, 1077.

[38] Memorandum From Jane Pisano of the National Security. Council Staff to the President's Deputy Assistant for. National Security Affairs (Aaron) Washington, May 6, 1977. Foreign Relations of the United States 1977-1980. Volume II: Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs, 123.

gainsay the moral validity of doing so. Providing the kind of large-scale economic assistance and systematic development aid that would help nations like Ethiopia in the long term to develop its own independent food sources was more complicated. The fact that Ethiopia was a clearly Soviet aligned nation, The lack of clearly established definitions of human rights within Carter's foreign policy meant that each case was met without a truly comprehensive or cemented form of approach, as "flexibility" was the watchword for policy makers within the Carter administration. The Carter administration's haphazard style of choosing who would receive aid or not lent itself to selectively applying its foreign policy. As a consequence, aid that perhaps ought to have been given to some countries slipped through the cracks.

Despite the flaws, apparent even at the time, the continuance of food aid regardless of other cutbacks in assistance reflected the intense desire to both appear to be doing something substantive to help LDCs, especially in Africa, and to fulfill the human rights orientation of Carter's administration. Internally, the White House was eager to engage domestically and internationally about food aid and human rights. The citizens of the United States, according to Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, had "a right to know...how their taxes are being used to better the lived of people abroad", because the average citizen did not care about abstract concepts like "resource flows amongst nations."[39] The "sterile texts" of laws and international trade agreements were not effective methods of communicating to the public what was being done, nor were they effective in garnering public sentiment.[40] Only by addressing "concrete development

[39] Address by Secretary of State Vance. Seattle, Washington, March 30, 1979. America's Commitment to Third World Development. Foreign Relations of the United States 1977-1980 Volume I: Foundations of Foreign Policy, 581

[40] Ibid.

problems", such as hunger, would the public understand and lend its full support.[41] Only when the "human focus" was brought into the spotlight could U.S. foreign policy be understood.[42]

In this same vein of thought, Carter signed into law the International Development and Food Assistance Act of 1978, which did not revolutionize existing policy, it merely allowed for further levels of assistance to be given abroad, but did include a section that explicitly detailed the "concept of using foreign assistance to fulfill 'basic human needs."[43] Such language was meant to be relatable to the public. The popularity of human rights policy was incredibly important to Carter's administration because of the post-Vietnam malaise that pervaded U.S. public opinion during Carter's term.[44] “Vietnam Syndrome” gripped the mind of the nation, creating a public was war weary, and not in favor of direct intervention abroad.[45] Human rights policy more broadly, but especially morally righteous portions like hunger, was viewed as a way to garner domestic and international good will by taking indirect action around the world. Food given to hungry nations demonstrably saved thousands of lives in a way that proxy wars and morally ambiguous interventions against the USSR failed to show to the public eye.

In another example, a few short months before he created the Food Assistance Act of 1978, President Carter had created the Commission on World Hunger at the behest of Congress. The Commission's original inception was focused on involving the citizenry of

[41] Ibid.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Ibid.
[44] Paper Prepared by Professor William E. Griffith1Undated. Foreign Relations of the United States. Volume VI: Soviet Union, 271.
[45] Ibid.

the United States in discussing and becoming educated about the "nutritional well-being of citizens of the United States and of the world."[46] Additionally, in order to appeal to the broadest spectrum of people, Carter's administration debated increasing federal funding towards public education about world hunger because they felt that widely "based public support" within the U.S. was necessary to maintain the social and political will to legitimize Carter's policy. Congress members hoped that efforts like education and the Commission would encourage a dialogue amongst a "wide and diverse constituency" that would support sustained action to curb world hunger.[47] There was a basis for Carter and Congress' assumptions.

Domestic food aid had, during Carter's presidency, reached the highest levels since its inceptions decades before, with nearly one in ten citizens of the United States receiving food stamps by the end of his term in office.[48] A decade before food stamps had hit their socio-political zenith, as documentaries and television shows displayed how prevalent hunger was within borders of the U.S. and forced politicians to propose expanded food stamp programs.[49] It is reasonable to think that the Carter administration and Congress associated that the public's recent upwelling of support for food welfare within the United States with interest towards food welfare abroad. Certainly food stamps mirrored actual food aid, where it was a kind of pure service that was not easily abused. Food stamps have historically a positive connotation within the U.S. because they are

---

[46] Letter From Senator Hubert Humphrey to President Carter1 Washington, December 5, 1977. Foreign Relations of the United States 1977-1980 Volume II: Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs, 766.

[47] Ibid

[48] Michael Katz. *The Price of Citizenship*. (2001), 299-300.

[49] James Patterson. *America's Struggle Against Poverty in the Twentieth Century*. (2000), 163.

ostensibly only usable for redeeming groceries, much in the same manner that bulk donations of cereal and grain given to famine stricken LDCs were made to be used just for sustenance, and neither are as easily abused as, say, an influx of pure money.[50] The choice of continuing food aid to nations like Ethiopia begins to become clearer after considering the many benefits that the Carter administration associated with hunger relief.

[50] Katz. 301.

CHAPTER THREE: JIMMY CARTER AND IDI AMIN

Beyond Ethiopia, Carter had to contend with other problematic nations in East Africa. Uganda, then under the rule of bloody dictator Idi Amin, had become a target of Carter at the onset of his presidency, when he publically stated shortly after taking office that Amin's actions "have disgusted the entire civilized world" and that the United States had no direct relations with the country.[51] A blatant violator of international human rights standards, Amin had slaughtered over 500,000 of his own citizens and forcibly expelled nearly 100,000 Asian citizens since his rise to power in 1971.[52] The brutal leader responded much the same way that Mengistu Haile Mariam did when threatened by Carter, publically scoffing at the United States' apparent hypocrisy in criticizing what he regarded as internal political matters when "Americans killed red Indians and invaded Cuba...Are they not ashamed of the people they have killed in Vietnam? Are they not ashamed of killing thousands in Hiroshima? Then they talk of Amin."[53] Carter's administration was enthusiastically joined by many other African governments in condemning Amin's rule, and began to enact, through multilateral apparatuses like the United Nation's Human Rights Commission (HRC), investigations and international action. Although Uganda was an obvious and easy target for Carter in regards to human rights, there were complications.

---

[51] Ibid., 131

[52] Richard Ullman. Human Rights and Economic Power: The United States Versus Idi Amin. Foreign Affairs (1978). http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/29141/richard-h-ullman/human-rights-and-economic-power-the-united-states-versus-idi-ami

[53] *Jet.* Idi Amin Defends Himself at Afro-Arab Summit Talks. March 24, 1977

At the onset of its independence in 1961 from colonial rule, Uganda was able to produce enough food to feed its population.[54] Over the course of Amin's chaotic rule, however, and the expulsion of tens of thousands of Asian citizens who comprised a significant portion of the working middle class, food production levels dropped precipitously. By 1972, a year after Amin took office, food production levels had dropped by half, and this trend continued until 1980.[55] Food scarcity in Uganda became a problem during Carter's presidency, which created an obvious conflict with his overarching human rights policy. Providing food aid to Uganda could make the United States seem as hypocritical as Amin accused. Because perception abroad was one of the major goals of improvement for Carter's administration, anything that could damage the international image of the U.S. was dangerous. As such, in the same IFI votes on loans in which the United States abstained from outright negation of aid for Ethiopia, the U.S. explicitly voted "no" towards giving any form of aid to Amin's regime, an affirmation both of Carter's anti-Amin and pro-human rights stance.[56] Further confirmation of the United States' opposition to Amin came in the form of a trade embargo with the African country in 1978.

Congress, a few weeks after Amin was out of office, and at the strong encouragement of Carter himself, repealed the bills that prohibited humanitarian and economic aid being sent to Uganda, as well as the economic embargo on coffee in its

[54] Andre Leliveld, Ton Dietz, Dick Foeken, Wijnand Klaver. *Agricultural Dynamics and Food Security Trends in Uganda. Agro-Food Clusters in Africa,* (2013). 7

[55] Ibid.

[56] Memorandum From Secretary of State Vance and the Deputy Secretary of State (Christopher) to President Carter. Washington, March 27, 1978Foreign Relations of the United States 1977-1980. Volume II: Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs, 436.

entirety, although they kept the ban on military assistance intact.[57] The degradation of Uganda's agricultural and economic integrity under Amin was exacerbated by chronic drought in the region, and food aid levels under the guise of the World Food Program and the Co-Operative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere (CARE) rose dramatically post-Amin.[58] From an annual rate of practically nothing during Amin's tenure in office, U.S. aid rose to over a million tons of aid to the famine suffering nation.[59] The reversal of aid after Amin's removal from power and the continuance of aid to Ethiopia are both examples of the Carter administration's foreign policy, entangled as it was dealing with both image perception and actual humanitarian aid. International and domestic groups had to be factored into every decision that Carter made, more so than other presidents because of his explicit promise to reform foreign policy and provide a greater degree of moral transparency to his administration. No longer would the popular image of the United States be that of a hypocritical "arms merchant" that was more concerned with "might and money" instead of actually pursuing the substantiating the ethics and morality to which it publically held the rest of the world to.[60] Carter quickly latched onto the fall of Amin to promote the United States' sudden willingness to end the sanctions placed against the country. This seem surprising as the embargo was designed to weaken one of Carters' most frustrating enemies in Africa, but the administration was actually not trying

[57] S.1019 A bill to amend the International Development and Food Assistance Act of 1978 and the Foreign Assistance and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 1979 by striking out certain prohibitions relating to Uganda, and for other purposes. April 1979.

[58] Memorandum for Special Representative for Economic Summits (Owen) to Carter. Washington, undated. Foreign Relations of the United States 1977-1980. Volume II: Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs, 910.

[59] Ibid.

[60] Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter. Washington, January 12, 1978Foreign Relations of the United States 1977-1980. Volume I: Foundations of Foreign Policy, 287.

to damage Amin with the embargo. Indeed, Carter was actively against the embargo being passed by Congress in the first place.

The administration actively fought against the embargo that was placed on Uganda in 1978 from its inception to the time it passed Congress. There were several reasons that the administration gave to avoid the embargo. The administration took the position that it was not the role of the United States to "attempt to bring about the overthrow of foreign governments" as a major part of its foreign policy. The embargo was intended to target Uganda's main export, coffee, and destabilize the Amin regime. The administration had been considering the repercussions of the downfall of the Ugandan dictator for some time before Congress began to take independent action. The CIA, in June of 1977, several months after Carter took office, created a report that detailed the possible consequences that would arise should Amin be overthrown by a coup or assassinated by an outside force.

The report describes the immense uncertainty that surrounded such an event happening, as there were no leaders in the country that were able to unite the divisive ethnic and cultural barriers of the different tribes that comprised Uganda. Should Amin have fallen without a unifying leader to step into the vacuum of his death the country and the region would have faced even greater instability. Most problematic is the fact that the military would have been left leaderless, and without its main supporter, as Amin used the military to retain his stranglehold on the Ugandan government and people. Other countries in the immediate area, especially Tanzania and Kenya, had been "long concerned about Amin and his threat to their security," and were likely to try to take control of the downfall of Amin to try and create a more favorable outcome. The

administration was extremely reluctant to continue the kind of direct interventions that so typified previous administrations, and were the kind of actions that Carter had explicitly campaigned against.

International and domestic groups had to be factored into every decision that Carter made, more so than other presidents because of his explicit promise to reform foreign policy and provide a greater degree of moral transparency to his administration than those prior. No longer would the popular image of the United States be that of a hypocritical "arms merchant" that was more concerned with "might and money" instead of actually pursuing the substantiating the ethics and morality to which it publically held the rest of the world to.[61] A firm military action by Washington would likely only make matters worse in these regards. The United States would not appeal to the world by inveighing in other nations' problems, at least not as it had in the past. A more indirect route was called for, yet the Carter administration refused to take the greater leap and impose wide ranging and unilateral economic sanctions against Amin.

One of the other reasons the administration gave for not supporting sanctions were the lives of the 200 or so Americans in the country, who were still at risk of reprisals that the administration feared Amin would take should the embargo be passed. Amin had threatened these men and women before, and the increasingly blatant human rights violations of his own citizens made Carter even more reluctant to want to antagonize the dictator beyond his usual calls in the international media for Amin to halt

[61] Memorandum from the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter. Washington, January 12, 1978 *Foreign Relations of the United States 1977-1980. Volume I: Foundations of Foreign Policy,* 287.

his actions. The United States had, the administration emphasized, already placed Uganda under international economic reprisals, and distanced itself as much as possible diplomatically from Amin's regime. More action was not necessary, and even undesirable. Perhaps most importantly an economic embargo could also backfire, as it would set the precedent that could be dangerous. Other nations could do the same to the United States or U.S. allies as well. The administration did not want to open the door to large scale economic warfare in the context of the Cold War, or use it to affect changes within other countries. Tellingly, the National Security Council advised President Carter a year before Congress' unilateral push through of the embargo that a soft approach towards an embargo on coffee could be applicable, if it was kept low scale.[62]In a section of a memorandum about possible human rights initiatives, the NSC called for the President or Andrew Young to speak out against "gross violators" of human rights, and in the case of Uganda, advised that Carter himself could "suggest, in a low key manner, that Americans might want to organize an informal, voluntary boycott of Ugandan coffee." [63]An informal boycott could do little to truly damage the Ugandan economy, but it would garner a great deal of attention internationally and damage Amin in the sphere of perception. The most problematic aspect of the sanctions, perhaps, was the assertion by the Carter administration that Uganda would have little trouble finding new trading partners for its much desired coffee crop. If the U.S. alone was the only country, or one of the only few countries, to embargo trade with Uganda, it would largely be ineffective.

[62] Memorandum from Jessica Tuchman of the national Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for national Security Affairs (Brzezinski), Washington, October 10, 1977: Subject Possible Human Rights Initiatives. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1977-1980. Volume II: Human Rights and Humanitarian Policy*

[63] Ibid.

Internal debate within Carter's administration continued, however, over whether or not the embargo should have been enacted and whether or not aid ought to be given to Ugandans as it had to other human rights violators like Ethiopia.[64] Ethiopia and Uganda were both recipients of Soviet military aid and leaned towards the USSR in the Cold War, which explains the refusal to provide either of them military and developmental assistance, the U.S. would not want to strengthen the power of nations aligned with its' rival in global power. Indeed, scarcely a few weeks had passed since the Amin had threatened United States citizens at Entebbe airport and the Ugandan government was hosting Soviet and Cuban ambassadors, State department documents show, where Amin was "very happy" with the content of the meetings.[65] Frustratingly for Carter, the human rights initiatives that so typified his campaign and reorientation of U.S. foreign policy slipped by him when it came to Uganda. Internally, the administration was increasingly aware of the fact that other parts of the government, most notably Congress, were advancing human rights causes unilaterally without the consent of the administration. Indeed, the National Security Council created analysis papers for the President and Brzezinski that highlighted the fact that Congress saw itself as the "promoter and defender of human rights concerns" rather than the administration.[66] In the notable case of the Ugandan trade embargo, the NSC paper asserted, there had been established "the general pattern that in most cases Congress has led and the Administration has

[64] Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter. Washington, January 12, 1978 *Foreign Relations of the United States 1977-1980. Volume I: Foundations of Foreign Policy*, 287.

[65] Kampala Domestic Service in English: Amin Talks with Russian, Cuban Envoys, March, 1977. Box: National Security Affairs, File: Uganda. *Jimmy Carter Library.*

[66] Paper Prepared by the Global Issues Cluster of the National Security Council Staff, Washington, undated. Foreign Relations of the United States 1977-1980. *Volume II: Human Rights and Humanitarian Policy*

followed."[67] Unilateral action in Congress had only increased, especially in regards to blatant violators like Uganda, which had become a particularly popular point of contention between the Congress and the administration.

Specific Congressional members successfully lobbied for increased attention to be paid to Amin's violations, most notably Senators Church and, especially, Donald J. Pease, who had led the embargo and the anti-Amin movement. A small but very vocal anti-Amin movement had been growing in American political circles since 1976, headed by the former U.S. ambassador to Uganda, Thomas Melady.[68] Melady and Ugandan exiles spent great amounts of time lobbying Washington as well as going to churches around the U.S. and giving testimonies about Amin's human rights violations, in particular his efforts to kill Christians within Uganda.[69] American sentiment against Amin grew steadily, and these politicians, in particular Pease who had first started investigating Amin and his connections to American coffee makers, seized upon the opportunity.[70] In terms of political clout, the embargo paid off for them as they were able to lay claim to having been instrumental in the overthrow of the dictator.[71]The embargo itself had little effect, as Carter had warned, on the Ugandan economy; however, analysts at the time attributed the embargo's real power not in economic terms, but in psychological ones.[72] The embargo threatened Amin's power domestically, as it damaged

[67] Ibid.
[68] Ralph D. Nurnberger. "The United States and Idi Amin: Congress to the Rescue" *African Studies Review,* Vol. 25, No. 1 (Mar., 1982), 49.
[69] Nurnberger, 47.
[70] Ibid.58
[71] Ibid.
[72] Judith Miller, "When Sanctions Worked", *Foreign Affairs*, March 15th, 1980.

his prestige and carefully cultivated personality cult, but it also emboldened Amin's regional enemies like Nyerere. The Tanzanian ambassador to the United States, Paul Bomani, was reported to have said that the embargo's passage was "a definite factor in our counterattack in that it helped make the world community aware of Uganda's human rights violations…we sensed that public opinion would not be violently opposed to Tanzania's measures."[73]

Mengistu's campaign against political opposition groups was horrific, but the total number of people killed was comparatively low when Amin's body count is considered. The Ugandan dictator's bloody rule resulted in several dozen times the number of Mengistu's total casualties. Amin's brutality was also much more advertised in the international media because of its severity and the eccentric nature of the dictator himself, which attracted increased media attention.[74] The "flexibility" of human rights policy under Carter becomes more readily apparent when the two cases are compared. Carter was willing to selectively consider when he would give certain kinds of aid to governments that violated human rights. Ethiopia, and many other nations that had histories of human rights abuses like Indonesia, Zaire, and even Somalia were granted aid as long as they agreed to explicitly use the relief that was given to them for those most in need.[75] No such offer was given to Amin. The Soviets were far less invested in Amin than in Mengistu and the aid given to the Ethiopian government was much greater than that sent to Amin. The comparative lack of aid sent by the Soviets was known by the

[73] Ibid.

[74] *Foreign Affairs*. http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/29141/richard-h-ullman/human-rights-and-economic-power-the-united-states-versus-idi-ami

[75]Memorandum From Jessica Tuchman of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski). Washington, October 10, 1977 Foreign Relations of the United States, Volume II: Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs.

Carter administration, and does not account entirely for Carter's refusal to any aid, even food aid, to Uganda. Amin, like Mengistu, was considered by the Carter administration to be a destabilizing factor in East Africa, but the greatest difference between the two leaders was Amin's human rights record.

Despite the influence of the United States' embargo on Amin's fall and the eventual food relief sent to Uganda, the situation worsened. Recent *Washington Post* articles with titles like "Where Children Fight for Kernels", "Diary of Anguished Trip to Land of the Damned," and "60 Million in East Africa go Hungry" had not only kept Uganda within the public eye, but had caused increased attention directed towards East Africa as a whole by illustrating the plight of those in the region, something that internal documents show the Carter administration was aware of.[76] There was a need, then, to address publically and formally the steps that the administration was going to take in order to assist the Ugandan people and their new government as it recovered from Amin's economic mismanagement and the increasingly poor drought in the region which combined to worsen famine levels drastically. Carter eagerly pursued public venues in which to display his administration's commitment to human rights and world hunger.

A meeting with the Pope in June of 1980, for instance, became an opportunity for Carter to propagandize. Internal documents show that his advisors were committed to having Carter play up the United States' role in alleviating hunger in Africa during his visit to Rome. Publicity was the key factor in the meeting; four U.N. food agencies were headquartered in Rome, and memorandums to Carter asked that he either make televised

[76] Ibid.

remarks to the heads of these groups or to general press meetings at their buildings.[77] In the words of the U.S. embassy to the Vatican "it would be far more effective and dramatic for the President, in addition to discussing this issue [food relief] with the Pope, to give twenty minutes of his schedule to a meeting with these important U.N. agency heads. This in itself would generate favorable publicity…"[78] The issue of greatest importance in terms of public image making was famine in Uganda.. At a minimum, Carter was strongly encouraged to engage the pope in dialogue about the plight in Uganda and to use that "news peg" as a sound bite for later meetings with the press to display both the fact that he was discussing hunger in Uganda with world leaders and with humanitarian leaders like the Pope.[79] The inherently religious and moral nature of the Pope's office meant that he was an excellent publicity opportunity for Carter, and his administration was fully cognizant of this fact. The way that the Carter administration conceived of public opinion improving during the visit to the Vatican was in and of itself rather revealing. The meeting with the Pope would appeal to not only "religious" and "charitable" constituents because of the Pope's rather unique position as an international figurehead, but also "black groups" at home and abroad because of the topic of conversation, famine in Uganda.[80] The "black groups" at home in the U.S. were of particular concern for Carter because of increasing popular opposition to his administration's lack of substantive effort to halt racial injustice in South Africa.

[77] Ibid., 909.
[78] Ibid., 910.
[79] Ibid., 911.
[80] Ibid., 912.

The apartheid regime in South Africa had been the most glaring and consistent violator of human rights within the African continent for decades, and continued to pursue increasingly harsh measures to keep itself in power during Carter's presidency. Indeed, it was during Carter's first year in office that Pretoria began a dramatic crackdown on its black citizens, banning newspapers and jailing prominent activists.[81] Carter and his administration, from the outset of his term of office, had been concerned with fixing the image of the U.S. as a facilitator of the regime in Pretoria because "past support of South Africa…is viewed by many as our single most repugnant policy in the area of human rights."[82] Carter's administration, over the course of his presidency, continued to try and publically decry South Africa because doing so allowed Carter to garner support from African governments who entirely opposed the apartheid regime. Anti-apartheid rhetoric "greatly enhances our stature in the area as a whole," as a memorandum to the Secretary of State said, even as African nations grew frustrated that change was not occurring.[83] Unfortunately, although the rhetoric was present there was a lack of truly effective or groundbreaking efforts by Carter or any previous administration to tackle Pretoria head on. Over the course of nearly two decades, from 1961 to Carter's entrance to office in 1977, U.S. trade to South Africa had decreased in favor of neighboring countries, but South Africa was still the region's largest economy and an important regional ally against Soviet incursion. The "middle–of-the-road-solutions" were failing to achieve anything of note, largely because Carter's stance towards South

[81] Ibid., 351.
[82] Ibid., 8.
[83] Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter. Washington, December 2, 1978 Foreign Relations of the United States. 1977-1980. Volume I: Foundations of Foreign Policy, 488.

Africa was to be "correct but as easy on them as possible."[84] Black Americans were fully aware of Carter's waffling approach and were utterly dismissive of it. In the same article that detailed Idi Amin's speech in which he called out U.S. hypocrisy, the writer made note of a black lawyer that angrily asked why "President Carter, and United Nations Ambassador Andrew Young" did not apply the same scrutiny of human rights towards "Ian Smith of Rhodesia or John Vorster, Prime Minister of South Africa. Carter is not writing to Vorster saying the whole world is outraged."[85] Secretary of State Young had even ruled out military intervention in the region on either side of the conflict, whether that meant opening up the extant support of the apartheid regime in order to keep its support, or to overthrow it. Military intervention was entirely unviable because it may cause "a civil war at home" due to the fact that "the U.S. armed forces, which are 30% black, wouldn't fight for the South African government."[86] South Africa was a major point of contention for both international and domestic perceptions of the U.S. government. Carter's solution, aside from wavering on a firm position on apartheid, involved efforts like the meeting with the Pope.

In a speech on the 30th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), President Carter remarked that "hunger, disease, and poverty are enemies of human potential which are as relentless as any oppressive government."[87] The goal of Carter's reorientation of U.S. foreign policy post-Vietnam was to correct how the world

[84] Simon Stevens. "From the Viewpoint of a Southern Governor: The Carter Administration and Apartheid, 1977–81."

[85] *Jet*. "Idi Amin Defends Himself at Afro-Arab Summit Talks". March 24, 1977

[86] *Jet*. "Young Can't See U.S. Troops in Black Africa". March 24, 1977.

[87] Remarks by President Carter. December 6, 1978. Foreign Relations of the United States 1977-1980. Volume I: Foundations of Foreign Policy, 101.

viewed his country. The application of human rights provided a convenient, logical, and appealing tool upon which Carter could affix his foreign policy standard. Rhetoric and publicity were equally as important as actual efforts to correct human rights abuses and failures abroad. Ethiopia and Uganda provide two examples, two sides of the coin of Carter's policy that illustrate the complex relationship between human rights, hunger, and the gross realities of a global conflict. On the one hand, Ethiopia was a violator of the human rights of its citizens, which meant that Carter had to oppose it on his human rights principles, and additionally, Mengistu was a clear supporter of the USSR, which meant that most forms of aid to the country would be a strategic mistake in the context of the global Cold War; on the other hand, people in Ethiopia were starving. The "oppressive government" that Carter mentions in the UDHR speech is present, and obligates Carter to stop aiding Ethiopia. Hunger, however, provides a shortcut, a backdoor into the hearts and minds of international and domestic populaces. Carter fed Ethiopia, he assisted in the saving of likely thousands of civilian lives, and this was, in the eye of Carter's administration, a fact. A net gain was achieved even as the administration opposed nearly all other aspects of Mengistu's regime because positive publicity was garnered without gaining it at the expense of Cold War strategic value.

Uganda is the opposite case. Idi Amin's regime was too terrible, too fraught with moral atrocities to support in any real regard while the dictator was in power. Amin's regime was untrustworthy, irrational in its bloody persecution of minority groups and leadership to adequately rely on the dissemination of food aid to those in need. There were no abstentions from voting on loans for Uganda, no ambivalence, only stark negatives from Carter's administration. The logical conclusion of the Carter

administration was that Uganda was too far gone, a lost case in comparison to Ethiopia; with Mengistu at least Carter could salvage a public image coup, albeit a minor one, while still hurting an ally of the USSR, albeit in a minor fashion. Additionally, the stark refusal to even supply food aid would lend even more weight to the full embargo and multilateral restrictions placed upon Uganda by the U.S. and the U.N. The eagerness with which the United States government created and pushed through bills removing the barriers on aid and embargos towards Uganda could be construed as solely reflecting the intense desire to enact positive humanitarian assistance and fulfill the moral imperatives of Carter's foreign policy. More realistically, however, the haste with which Carter began to funnel aid towards the East African nation can be construed as also being done with consideration towards publicity as well as helping the hungry. This is especially obvious when taken into consideration with the scrutiny that the administration placed on Carter's subsequent public relations tour abroad, perhaps most tellingly the meeting with the Pope at the Vatican. The emphasis on Uganda and famine relief efforts in Africa were appeals to black Americans and other African governments who felt that not enough was being done on apartheid. Hunger and human rights were, once again, a tool by which Carter could try to turn public opinion to his favor.

Deputy Secretary of State Warren Christopher claimed, two months after Carter was sworn into office, that the adoption of human rights as his foreign policy was not "because of its popularity" within the United States.[88] The emphasis on improving the image of the United States, explicit statements from Carter administration officials,

[88] Statement by the Deputy Secretary of State Christopher Before the Senate Foreign Relaitons Committee Subcommittee on Foreign Assistance. Washington, March 7, 1977. Foreign Relations of the United States 1977-1980 Volume I: Foundations of Foreign Policy, 27.

seems to contradict Christopher's testimony. The selective use of human rights by Carter, his ability to ignore or simply accept human rights violators as recipients of food aid, and even economic aid in some circumstances other than Ethiopia and Uganda, undermines the morality of his foreign policy. In Carter's inaugural speech, he promised that he would be guided by a "moral sense" that "dictates a clear-cut preference for those societies which share with us an abiding respect for individual human rights." The United States would "not seek to intimidate" though "it is clear that a world which others can dominate with impunity would be inhospitable to decency and a threat to the well-being of all people." Well-meaning words, but the moral stance of his policy is lessened by the fact that food aid was not sent to Uganda. This paper assumes that Carter's logic in this regard was informed by Amin's wretched human rights record, and the lack of trust in Amin to justly distribute aid, but from a purely moral stance, a purely altruistic position, food aid could have still be sent. Even if Amin doled out pittances lives may well have been saved. That being said, Carter's position makes sense in a foreign relations point of view, a Cold War geopolitics standpoint, but the fact that Carter emphasizes morality makes his position awkward to maintain at times. Carter's administration danced the fine line between needing to give aid and making sure that the recipients of that aid were palatable enough to domestic and international audiences. Carter's successor, Ronald Reagan, would face similar problems in the Horn of Africa, as drought and famine once again struck the region, and throughout his presidency would be forced to consider how to address the issue of humanitarian relief given to the ailing people of the area.

CHAPTER FOUR: A HUNGRY CHILD IS POLITICS

William P. Clark had a bad morning on June 27th, 1983. The day before, *The Washington Post* published another damning indictment of the Reagan administration's failures to relieve famine in Ethiopia. Clark, the National Security Advisor to Ronald Reagan, went to work, and received a memorandum explaining how to answer the bad press that the *Post* articles would inevitably create.[89] The exposé accused the administration of politicizing the crisis, of "turning its back on the potential disaster" that the drought inspired famine was causing because the Ethiopian government was allied with the Soviet Union.[90] The memorandum advised Clark to hold fast, defending the administration's meagre amounts of aid being sent to the beleaguered African nation and the reasons behind their efforts. The American people, Clark was to say, often called on the President to answer disasters without regard to Cold War politics, and this moral obligation was unshaken under Reagan's tenure; the resources being sent to Ethiopia were to "feed starving people", because this was "a policy of this administration" to act on disasters "without regard to politics."[91] Clark's suggested responses were, however, fabrications. The Reagan administration was absolutely concerned with politics in the Ethiopian famine, and the Cold War's influence seeped into every aspect of their considerations about how they ought to address increasing calls to action.

---

[89] Memorandum for William P. Clark from M. Peter McPherson: Proposed Press Guidance, June 27, 1983. Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, CO049 Ethiopia, Box 71.

[90] Jay Ross, "Famine, War Threaten Thousands in Ethiopia" *The Washington Post*, June 26, 1983.

[91] Memorandum for William P. Clark from M. Peter McPherson: Proposed Press Guidance, June 27, 1983. Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

Ethiopia's drought and subsequent famine were not isolated incidents. Beginning in 1983 and lasting until early 1986, the vast majority of the Horn of Africa was affected by severe drought, this occurred again in 1987-88. Although warning signs were present, and reported on by a variety of governmental and non-governmental agencies, the West, and the United States in particular, failed to respond with the needed speed or strength of effort to head off the famine, a fact known at the time. Throughout 1983 and into 1984 the Reagan administration came under continuously escalating scrutiny for its lack of a substantial relief effort in the media, which peaked in the fall of 1984. Reports on the increasingly dire situation in the Horn were prevalent, and found their way onto the front pages of dozens of major publications, winding up on the front porch of thousands upon thousands of Americans.[92] Although reluctant, Reagan acquiesced and began to funnel gigantic amounts of humanitarian relief towards Ethiopia.

However the problems that Reagan faced in the Horn were themselves part of a larger web of security problems that embroiled several continents. The Reagan administration was concerned not only with the regional issues that were facing the Horn, but the global security problems of the Cold War. The wars in Afghanistan and Iran were perceived to be major security threats for the United States by the Reagan administration, and the Horn of Africa was considered to be a fairly important strategic location in the security of the Middle East. The humanitarian crises that faced the Horn did not exist in a vacuum, indeed quite the opposite was true; the ever shifting network of security

[92] There are a large number of examples, see: Judith Miller, "Famine Engulfs Ethiopia: Death Toll Rises" *The New York Times*, September 18, 1984; already cited Jay Ross, "Famine, War Threaten Thousands in Ethiopia", *The Washington Post*, June 26, 1983; Philip M. Boffey, "A.I.D. Chief Tells of Agony of African Famine", *The New York Times*, November 10, 1984.

problems that the Cold War presented the United States directly influenced their decisions on whether or not to provide hunger relief, and the manner in which they went about addressing drought and famine in the Horn of Africa.

Ronald Reagan entered office at a tumultuous time. Two large-scale wars in the Middle East were raging, and the former actor was entering into the ring, as it were, right as the Cold War sloughed off the final vestiges of the 1970s détente and the conflict fired back up. The Horn of Africa has long been strategically linked by the United States to the larger security of the continent and the Middle East because of its proximity to the area, particularly the Gulf States, and the Reagan administration felt no differently.[93] Ethiopia had been receiving large amounts of economic and military assistance from the Soviet Union since 1977, after they had a falling out with the United States, and began courting the USSR for aid. Indeed, the Horn had been one of the many chessboard conflicts between the Soviet Union and the United States for some time; by the 1980s, Ethiopia had emerged as the Soviet Union's last bastion of direct support in the Horn, after the USSR had bungled relations with allied African governments in the previous years.[94] Through the Ethiopian government the Soviet Union was able to strike out at U.S. interests in the Horn. It is not surprising that the neighboring nation of Sudan was regarded by the United States as one of its greatest allies in the area.

The United States considered Sudan an important regional partner, alongside Egypt, in the strategic security of the Horn, and North Africa more generally.[95] Economic

[93] National Security Decision Directive 57: United States Policy Towards the Horn of Africa, September 17, 1982.
[94] Poster, 409.
[95] NSDD 57.

and military assistance to Sudan had steadily increased since Reagan's presidency began in 1981, and would continue to do so at a small but steady rate for most of the decade.[96] Reagan's administration made early commitments to the security of the Horn through Sudan, continuously thinking of the country when it was considering strategic questions of the region. When Egyptian leader Anwar Sadat was assassinated on October 6th 1981, for instance, two days later the Reagan administration resolved to not only increase the levels of military assistance and training exercises for Egypt, but Sudan as well.[97]

In effect, the Horn was split in two. The Soviet Union had Ethiopia as their catspaw, and the United States had Sudan. The situation became exponentially more complicated in 1983 as the drought began to take hold, and a rebellion in South Sudan against the established government formed, backed in large part by Ethiopia. In 1983, the Sudanese President Gaafar Nimeiry instituted Sharia law in his nation, and the backlash against this action, as well as his government's favoritism for the northern regions of the state led to the creation of the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (here on SPLA). The increased unrest was exacerbated by the ever increasing drought and famine, the two events merged together to present a clear danger to the stability of Sudan and, in the minds of American policy makers, the region as a whole.

[96] U.S. Overseas Loans and Grants and Assistance from International Organizations: Obligations and Loan Authorizations, July 1, 1945- September 30, 1985; U.S. Overseas Loans and Grants and Assistance from International Organizations: obligations and Loan Authorizations, July 1, 1945-Septermber 30, 1989.

[97] NSDD 14: Security Considerations for Egypt and Sudan, October 8, 1981.

Historians that have examined these events have largely focused on this narrative, exploring the manner in which the United States provided and used humanitarian relief in Ethiopia. A relatively small number of scholars have looked at the history of the famine since the mid to late 1980s and early 1990s, as such the vast majority of work done on the subject was written only shortly after the events that occurred took place.[98] Newer work on the famine has been scarce, the most prominent example being Alexander Poster's examination of the logistical and strategic efforts of the Reagan administration in providing aid to Ethiopia to discredit the Soviet allied regime under Mengistu Haile Mariam.[99] Poster's scholarship is focused, however, like so many of the previous examinations, on Ethiopia. The larger Horn region has been neglected in the historiography of both the region and within the field of diplomatic history. Although studies of famine (and be extension human rights) have become increasingly common amongst historians of foreign relations, the Horn has been looked at in depth by only Poster's work.

---

[98] See Chester, Crocker. *Managing Global Chaos: Sources and Responses to International Conflict* (1996); Alexander De Waal. *Evil Days: 30 Years of War and Famine in Ethiopia. African Watch Report* (1991); De Waal, *Famine that Kills: Darfur, Sudan 1984-1985*. (1989); Korn, David A. *Ethiopia, the United States and the Soviet Union* (1986); Andrew Natsios. *U.S. Foreign policy and the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse: Humanitarian Relief in Complex Emergencies* (1997); Dawit Wolde Giorgis. *Red Tears: War, Famine, and Revolution in Ethiopia (1989)*; Steven L Varnis. *Reluctant Aid or Aiding the Reluctant?: U.S. Food Policy and Ethiopian Famine Relief* (1990); Samuel M. Makinda, *Superpower Diplomacy in the Horn of Africa* (1986); Sen Amartya. *Food Entitlements and Economic Chains: Hunger, Entitlement and Linkages.* In Hunger in History: Food Shortages, Poverty and Deprivation, ed. by Lucile F. Newman (1990); Sen, Amartya. *Poverty and Famines: an Essay on Entitlement and Deprivation* (1981); and Kurt Jasson. *The Ethiopian Famine* (1987), Peter J. Schraeder. The Horn of Africa: US Foreign Policy in an Altered Cold War Environment. *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 46, No. 4 (Autumn, 1992), pp. 571-593.

[99] Poster, Alexander. "The Gentle War: Famine Relief, Politics, and Privatization in Ethiopia, 1983–1986." *Diplomatic History*, Volume 36, Issue 2, pages 399–425, April 2012. The most recent scholarship also includes Robert G. Patman The Soviet Union in the Horn of Africa: The Diplomacy of Intervention and Disengagement (Cambridge, 2009).

Nick Cullather, Michael Hogan, and Kristin Ahlberg are amongst the historians that have expanded our understanding of hunger and the complexities of humanitarian relief in their monographs. [100] Ahlberg's *Transplanting the Great Society* in particular is the most recent look at how hunger and humanitarian relief were used as tools of foreign policy, specifically during Lyndon Johnson's administration.[101] Save for Poster, these historians have not yet examined the Horn region in their studies of famine and relief efforts in terms of foreign policy. There are gaps, then, in the historiography. Extant area studies have not looked, for the most part, beyond Ethiopia, and foreign relations historians have similarly failed in this task.[102] Foreign relations scholars that have examined the Reagan administration, a burgeoning area of research as more and more sources become available, have paid attention to his policies towards human rights, but have largely ignored the Horn in their own research.[103]

---

[100] Nick Cullather, *The Hungry World* (2010); Michael Hogan, *The Marshall Plan: America, Britain, and the Reconstruction of Western Europe* (1987); Kristin Ahlberg, *Transplanting the Great Society: Lyndon Johnson and Food for Peace* (2008). See also: Julia Irwin. *Making the World Safe: The American Red Cross and a Nation's Humanitarian Awakening*. (2013); Erin Black. *One of the Most Vexing Problems in American Foreign Relations: The Senate Foreign Relations Committee's Consideration of the Aid Program* c. 1960s (2007) and Sarah B. Snyder, "The Defeat of Ernest Lefever's Nomination: Keeping Human Rights on the United States Foreign Policy Agenda," in *Challenging U.S. Foreign Policy: America and the World in the Long Twentieth Century*, eds. Bevan Sewell and Scott Lucas (Basingstoke, UK, 2011); and Keys, Barbara. "Congress, Kissinger, and the Origins of Hu-man Rights Diplomacy," *Diplomatic History* 34: 5 (November 2010).

[101] See also, Amy L. Staples, *The Birth of Development: How the World Bank, Food and Agriculture Organization, And World Health Organization Have Changed the World 1945-1965*. (2006). Atina Grossman, "Grams, Calories, and Food: Languages of Victimization, Entitlement, and Human Rights in Occupied Germany, 1945–1949," in *The Human Rights Revolution*, eds. Iriye, Goedde, and Hitchcock.

[102] For a notable exception focused on Somalia, see: Jeffrey A. Lefebvre, *Arms for the Horn: U.S. Security Policy in Ethiopia and Somalia, 1953–1991* (1991).

[103] A basic overview of Reagan's historiography; Adamishin, Anatoly, and Schifter, Richard. *Human Rights, Perestroika, and the End of the Cold War* (Washington, DC,2009); Bon Tempo, Carl J. "From the Center-Right: Freedom House and Human Rights in the 1970s and 1980s," in The Human Rights Revolution, eds. Iriye, Goedde, and Hitchcock; Preston, Andrew. *Sword of the Spirit, Shield of Faith: Religion in American War and Diplomacy* (New York,

This paper will attempt to fill these voids, examining the famine relief efforts by the Reagan administration in the Sudan during the 1983-86 famine and the 1987-88 famine, caching these analyses within a larger context of global security concerns and the ways in which humanitarian aid was used to fight the battles of the Cold War under the auspices of the Reagan administration. The administration used food aid as a tool of foreign policy, using it to buttress allied governments to keep them stable and promote regional influence. This paper is intended to be a compliment to Alexander Poster's argument that the Reagan administration was forced into providing hunger relief for the Ethiopian famine by international and domestic pressure, largely from the media. While this paper agrees with Poster's work in this regard, Poster focuses on the issues of perception and security within humanitarian aid in Ethiopia, effectively leaving out half the story. This study instead looks at similar issues from the neglected perspective of Sudan. By doing this, the paper builds upon the half-finished narrative of the famines that struck the region in the 1980s, providing not only a greater understanding of these humanitarian crises, but also the ways in which the global Cold War influenced ostensibly humanitarian relief efforts.

The Horn, and Northern African more generally, was an important region for Cold War strategy concerns. "In light of the region's position opposite NATO's southern flank", a National Security memo states, the U.S. had to "devise appropriate policies to

2012). Schmitz, David F. *The United States and Right-Wing Dictator-ships, 1965–1989* (Cambridge, UK, 2006); Greg Grandin, *The Last Colonial Massacre: Latin America in the Cold War* (Chicago, 2004); and Morris Morley and Chris McGillion, "Soldiering On: The Reagan Administration and Redemocratisation in Chile, 1983–1986,"*Bulletin of Latin American Research* 25:1 (2006).

promote and protect American interests."[104] The Horn's important geostrategic position involved a complex mix of military positioning and regional influence. Although not literally located in the Middle East, cultural similarities and geographic proximity meant that the Horn was quite often attached to the region and considered an Arab state by policy makers.[105] It's position off the directly off the coast of the Suez Canal and the Arabian Peninsula, as well as its relative closeness to the Persian Gulf, made (and continues to make) the Horn of Africa ideal for extending influence throughout North Africa and the Middle East.[106] The expansion and control of influence in these regions was considered quite important to the Reagan administration. Similarly, the Soviets themselves had long connected the Horn to the broader span of security interests in the Middle East and the Indian Ocean. Ethiopia had been their greatest ally in the Horn since the late 1970s, and they continued to expand their influence by increasing support to other friendly governments like Libya. The USSR negotiated economic and military assistance treaties between countries that it favored in the Horn, linking them together not only in an economic sense but a strategic one. In 1981, Libya, Ethiopia, and communist separatist state of South Yemen signed a "Treaty of Friendship and Co-Operation", jointly condemning United States influence in the region at large and the recently increased US military presence.[107] The Treaty marked the first time that African and Middle Eastern governments, allied with the USSR, formed a cohesive alliance that was aimed explicitly at denying the United States a role in the Horn.[108] Nimeiry himself was

[104] NSDD 168: U.S. Policy towards North Africa. April 30, 1985.
[105] NSDD 99: United States Security Strategy for the Near East and South Asia, July 12, 1983.
[106] NSDD 57: United States Policy towards the Horn of Africa, September 17, 1982.
[107] Samuel M. Makinda, *Superpower Diplomacy in the Horn of Africa*. (1987). 194
[108] Ibid. 195

rumored to have claimed that the three governments were actively conspiring against him and his government during these Treaty meetings; ultimately his fears were proven to be true.[109] Given the larger conflicts that were being waged between the Soviet Union and Afghanistan, as well as between Iran and Iraq, large portions of the Middle East were under in the bloody shadow of war and uncertainty. The Reagan administration understandably viewed these intra-state conflicts as dangerous to the integrity of the Middle East as a whole, and devised plans to fall on the right side of the wars.

In both the Iran-Iraq war and the Soviet war in Afghanistan, the United States was determined to spin both conflicts in their favor. In Afghanistan, for instance, the U.S. wanted to keep the aggression of the Soviet Union at the fore of international discourse about the conflict, maintaining the image of the USSR as the instigators of the war.[110] Importantly, the U.S. wanted to keep this idea in the mind of "Third and Islamic world" states, in order to promote Soviet isolation.[111] Additionally, the U.S. wanted to "show firmness of purpose in deterring Soviet aggression in the Third World", in order to better garner support of Third World nations against the Soviets. Just as in Afghanistan, the United States was backing a country that was being invaded by the Soviet Union, in the case of Sudan it was at least by proxy via the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA), the rebel movement in the southern region of Sudan.

Similarly, in the Iran-Iraq conflict, the United States wanted to head off regional instability by mitigating the dangers posed by the war, because these conflicts "posed

[109] Ibid.
[110] NSDD 166: U.S. Programs and Strategy in Afghanistan, March 27, 1985.
[111] Ibid.

dangers to…vital interests" of the United States.[112] The Iran-Iraq war posed dangers to the Persian Gulf, especially towards shipping and the oil trade in Saudi Arabia; the United States planned to respond to the continuously escalating conflict by reaching out towards regional allies and increasing the levels of military and economic assistance towards key partners.[113] Indeed, the rhetoric of the Reagan administration became increasingly dire about the security of the Gulf as the war between Iran and Iraq dragged on; the Strait of Hormuz, the Suez Canal, and both the Arabian Peninsula and Persian Gulf were placed in danger of instability. These regions were viewed as extremely important for global economic security, and the White House was determined to keep them open by "whatever means necessary."[114] The possibility that oil routes would become blocked or somehow under the control of Soviet allies was a very tangible threat in the minds of policy makers in Washington early on in the conflict. In 1983, the administration called for NATO and its allies to be prepared to support with military and economic assistance "poor but important" nations such as Turkey, Pakistan, Egypt, and Sudan.[115] Effectively, these allies were to be put on alert, and be ready to assist in the possible efforts to "interdict Soviet combat forces to the Gulf region."[116] Beyond direct intervention, which was the least preferable method of influencing the outcome of the conflict, the U.S. wanted to expand the role of regional allies, such as Egypt, and as this paper suggests, Sudan, in their ability to provide military assistance if possible to Iraq.[117]

---

[112] USDD 99.
[113] USDD 141: Responding to Escalation in the Iran-Iraq War. May 24, 1984.
[114] USDD 114: U.S. Policy towards the Iran-Iraq War, November 26, 1983.
[115] USDD 99.
[116] Ibid.
[117] NSDD 139: Measures to Improve U.S. Posture and Readiness to Respond to Developments in the Iran-Iraq War, April 4, 1984.

In order to understand the multilayered problems that faced Sudan, it is most logical to begin with the longest standing one: famine. The Horn of Africa had faced waves of drought inspired famines for centuries before the 1983 disaster began, although this drought was the worst in the past several decades.[118] The 1983 drought was part of a larger cycle of twenty years of decreased rainfall levels that fell well below the average for the region.[119] One of the largest problems that Sudan faced, and continues to face, is the dramatic variance in its weather. Rainfall averages vary wildly based on location, and while northern regions could receive an adequate supply, communities not far to the south might get little to none.[120] Annual averages for rainfall are also deceptive; although rainfall levels in 1985 were, for instance, actually above average, the rain was so inconsistent in where and when it fell that farmers were unable to complete their harvests.[121] The Reagan administration was aware of the problems that the region faced, and identified hunger as one of the greatest threats that these countries endured.[122]

Although the droughts were often severe, as the one in 1983 was, the sheer scale of this famine in Ethiopia was, in part, due to the Mengistu regime's mismanagement of the crisis, where he did not want to acknowledge the famine in public; similarly, in Sudan, the drought was complicated by Nimeiry's refusal to address the problem in a timely manner. Nimeiry did not want to draw attention to the fact that a famine was occurring because he thought it would damage his reputation and the reputation of his

[118] Nick Cater, "The Roots of Famine". A Report for Oxfam (1986), 4.
[119] Ibid.
[120] Ibid.
[121] Ibid.
[122] See NSSD 1-84: US Third World Hunger Relief, and NSSD 3-86: US Support for Economic Growth in Sub-Saharan Africa, September 19th, 1986

government. [123] The reluctant nature of leaders in the Horn to admit that famine was occurring is actually not that surprising. There is a long history of famine causing disruption in the region, of course, but more than just brief periods of starvation and socioeconomic unrest these events have heralded the end of established governments. The leader of Ethiopia before Mengistu, the Emperor Haile Selassie, was ousted in a coup because, in part, of his blunders in addressing famine that struck the country in 1974.[124] Famine, then, ought to be viewed as a fixture in the lives of the people of the Horn of Africa, especially in Ethiopia and Sudan.

Although the Nimeiry regime refused to admit publically that the drought and famine were happening, there were other problems that were brewing in Sudan. Nimeiry's enshrinement and enforcement of Sharia law codes created a great deal of blowback throughout the country, part of a larger series of mishaps by his government. In 1983, he split the southern sections of Sudan so that the northern regions had favorable control of oil fields; this favoritism was part of a longer history of irredentism present in the southern areas, which Nimeiry resented, and had only come to terms with the rebellious elements in the South a decade prior.[125]

Part of the agreement was that the south was to gain increased autonomy, but Nimeiry refused to follow through. The partitioning of the southern regions was, in combination with the advent of Sharia laws (known as the "September Laws") the final

---

[123] Africa Watch, *Denying "The Honor of Living": Sudan, a Human Rights Disaster* (1990). 9-10.

[124] Andrew S. Natsios, *U.S. Foreign Policy and the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse: Humanitarian Relief and Complex Emergencies* (1997). 275 Kindle Edition.

[125] Africa Watch, *Denying "The Honor of Living": Sudan, a Human Rights Disaster* (1990). 7-8

straw; elements of the army mutinied and, under the leadership of John Garang, formed the SPLA.[126] The SPLA received assistance from the very beginning from the Ethiopian government because its stated goals were to overthrow Nimeiry's government, to recognize the right of self-determination for the regions of Sudan if unification was not possible.[127] The Soviet Union was funding the Mengistu regime, who in turn were providing a base of operations and logistical support for the SPLA.[128] The Cold War connections begin to become more evident as one connects the role of Ethiopia in the formation and promulgation of the SPLA movement, which was still headed by John Garang, who was ardently opposed to Nimeiry's regime.[129]

The U.S. was aware of the interlocking nature of these threats to Sudan, and the broader Cold War security implications, which influenced their understanding of the relief effort. Although the necessity of humanitarian relief was not in question, the exact method of going about providing relief was debated. On the committees to examine the famine relief that was to be sent to Ethiopia and Sudan the members of Congress discussing the allocation of aid were well aware of the civil war that was occurring in Sudan at the time.[130] By 1985, the relief effort to quell the famine was well under way,

---

[126] Ibid. 8-9.

[127] *Ethiopia and Sudan: warfare, politics, and famine:* hearing before the Select Committee on Hunger, House of Representatives, One Hundredth Congress, second session, hearing held in Washington, DC, July 14, 1988. 41. http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/002777944 (viewed on 4/13/2015).

[128] Human Rights Watch: Oil in Southern Sudan, http://www.hrw.org/reports/2003/sudan1103/10.htm#_ftn112

[129] Matthew J. Delaney, "John Garang and Sudanism: A Particular and Resilient Nationalist Ideology" http://digitalcommons.calpoly.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1047&context=forum.

[130] *Emergency famine relief needs in Ethiopia and Sudan*: hearing before the Subcommittee on Africa of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, Ninety-ninth Congress, first session, September 19, 1985. 50. http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=umn.31951d00283183g;view=1up;seq=54

and the committee was rife with stories told by impassioned congressional members who had gone to the Horn themselves and saw the devastation that the disaster was causing firsthand. Howard Wolpe, the head of the subcommittee on Africa, opened the hearing with a personal anecdote, describing how he had seen "…6000 people who had traveled over 30 kilometers waiting for food", but despite the already "There was no transport available to bring food to these people." Six children died that morning." Ethiopia was identified as a humanitarian crisis, as was Sudan, but both had some congressmen questioning the viability of aid because of the civil wars that were occurring between rebels in Ethiopia trying to overthrow Mengistu, and the SPLA and Nimeiry's government forces fighting.[131] The committee met to discuss the viability and need for increased amounts of aid, and the heart-wrenchingly dramatic testimony of people like Wolpe, alongside the still ever increasing levels of media attention that the famine was garnering, meant that the aid was approved with a small degree of disagreement.

The aid sent to the stricken regions was distributed through a variety of different nongovernmental organizations and aid groups. There were a multitude of problems with this, however, ranging from inefficiency, corruption, and even a lack of vehicles needed to transport the aid relief to stricken areas. Aid imports sat in port towns for weeks or even months, rotting in their shipping containers.[132] Relief supplies were being sent out to these areas piecemeal at best, and although the U.S. government was aware of the problems that beset the relief effort they remained insistent that their humanitarian assistance was both successful and, on the whole, appropriately executed.[133] Wolpe, in

[131] Ibid.
[132] Ibid, 2.
[133] Ibid, 3.

his opening statements before the committee, took pains to make clear the fact that the United States efforts were not in question as such, that he wanted to "…emphasize this as strongly as I can, that the issue is not whether the United States has made a generous response to the African famine crisis. Clearly it has."[134]

The problems to which Wolpe referred were not with the amounts of aid sent, but with the logistics of relief efforts, the "transportation bottlenecks" that were killing people because they hampered the timely flow of humanitarian relief from reaching them. Because of the delayed nature of famine relief in the 1983-86 famine, the fault of which lies both on Mengistu and the United States government, relief was unable to arrive to stave off the worst effects of the famine.[135] Additionally, Mengistu's government refused to allow the timely movement of these supplies. Similarly in Sudan, Nimeiry's recalcitrance delayed the beginning of relief efforts, and he failed to adequately assist in the transportation of aid. Damning reports have emerged about the relief efforts, especially in Sudan, which were primarily overseen by USAID in the 1983-6 famine; as aid seen to have been "committed late, delivered late" and ultimately "failed to reach the right people."[136] Indeed, some reports have discredited the severity of the famine itself, saying that projections were overblown and the aid sent caused occasionally more problems than it fixed.[137] The supplies, somewhat ironically nicknamed "Reagan" in rural Sudanese areas because of the perception that he was solely responsible for their arrival, were something that people in the region were simply not expecting; "Who is this

[134] Ibid.
[135]
[136] Alex De Waal, *Famine that Kills: Darfur Sudan* (1989). 3813
[137] Ibid. 3805.

Reagan?" a farmer purportedly asked international workers, "…he ought to be promoted!"[138] The millions of Sudanese and refugee farmers that lived in the rural areas of the country, and were thus always hit hardest by famine, were not used to outside aid coming to them. Famine was a fact of life for most rural Sudanese, and they had their own local mechanisms in place to deal with it.[139]

The logistical issues that the United States and international relief in the Horn are complex, and the problems relating to Ethiopia have been more fully addressed elsewhere by Alexander Poster.[140] The logistical problems facing Sudan, however, were more varied and inherently related to larger security problems in the region. The SPLA rebels frequently attacked aid transportation convoys, stealing the supplies, and then falling back. The guerilla tactics of the SPLA hampered an already inefficient process even further. More broadly, the civil war was disrupting planting and harvesting patterns for hundreds of thousands of farmers in the south. Cattle herders were unable to move their herds to graze adequately, and what work was available rapidly dried up because of the dangerous environment the conflict posed.[141]Similarly, Sudan was increasingly faced with influxes of hundreds of thousands of refugees from neighboring nations due to internal conflicts, primarily during the 1983-6 famine from Chad, but also thousands from Ethiopia itself, who had fled the internal conflicts in Eritrea and Tigray.[142] These refugees presented an additional humanitarian crisis for the Sudanese government and the

[138] Ibid. 3669.
[139] Ibid. 3765.
[140] Poster. "The Gentle War: Famine Relief, Politics, and Privatization in Ethiopia, 1983–1986." *Diplomatic History*, Volume 36, Issue 2, pages 399–425, April 2012.
[141] Cater, 2.
[142] De Waal, 1692 Kindle Edition.

international relief efforts spearheaded by the United States, as they were, in a purely logistical sense, hundreds of thousands of stomachs that needed to be fed on top of the extant Sudanese population.[143] By 1986, Sudan had the largest refugee population in Africa; over a million refugees had sought sanctuary from drought, famine, and internecine warfare within Sudan, and the Sudanese government was floundering to provide them with the needed assistance to keep them alive.[144] Sudan had been the home for 750,000 refugees before the drought and famine began in 1983.[145] Roughly 500,000 Ethiopians had fled to north Sudan and 250,000 Ugandan refugees had taken up residence in the south.[146] Once the drought began to truly take hold in 1984, over 300,000 people fled from Ethiopia to Sudan, largely from the civil strife that was occurring in the northern areas of Ethiopia. At its greatest point, the flow of refugees reached nearly 3,500 a day.[147] Refugees from Chad also started to enter Sudan the same year, numbering over 120,000. The refugee influx lasted throughout the 1983-6 famine. Refugees from all around the Horn fled to Sudan because of common concerns, largely revolving around civil unrest in their home countries and the drought and famine that were plaguing the area entire. These problems were further exacerbated by the overthrow of Nimeiry in 1985.[148]

---

[143] Ethiopia and Sudan one year later: refugee and famine recovery needs: a minority staff report / prepared for the use of the Subcommittee on Immigration and Refugee Policy to the Committee on the Judiciary, United States Senate. 3, http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/008515664

[144] Ibid,3-4.

[145] Cater, 2.

[146] Ibid.

[147] Cater, 2.

[148] Ibid.

Nimeiry was ousted by a coup which led to a military junta led government until 1986, when free elections took place.[149] The coup that removed Nimeiry from power was a product of several factors, largely revolving around his bungled attempts to handle the famine relief, refugee efforts, and his longstanding repression of the Sudanese people. Nimeiry attempted to revolutionize Sudan's agricultural sector, asking for ever increasing amounts of money from institutions like the IMF in order to fund these efforts.[150] However, these grand schemes failed, in part due to the harsh nature of Sudan's climate, but mainly because of the inefficiency and corruption that were present in the numerous bureaucracies that Nimeiry created to run these agricultural schemes.[151] By the height of the drought and famine in 1985, Nimeiry had driven Sudan into 9 billion dollars of debt, and interest payments became so high that they exceeded the revenue of Sudan from its export income.[152] Economic problems were not the only issues that were laid at Nimeiry's feet, however.

As far back as 1975 with the creation of laws like the State Security Act, Nimeiry's government began instituting laws that allowed for arbitrary arrest and press crackdowns.[153] The breakdown of the protections provided by the state to its citizens only increased over time. By 1984, Nimeiry's government effectively had fully sanctioned the detention and sentencing without trial of political dissidents, and over 200 were held.[154] The institutionalization of Islamic Sharia laws in 1983, and the strengthening of these

[149] Africa Watch, *Denying "The Honor of Living"*, 10.
[150] Ibid. 8
[151] Cater, The Roots of Famine, 34.
[152] Ibid.
[153] Africa Watch, *Denying "The Honor of Living"*, 9.
[154] Ibid. 9

laws the next year when Nimeiry attempted to declare an Islamic State, were also incredibly detrimental to the political longevity of Nimeiry's regime, despite the fact that these actions were undertaken by Nimeiry as a way to appeal to the people. The forcible application of such laws were unpopular amongst most Sudanese, despite the fact that a large portion of the population was Muslim.[155] Throughout Nimeiry's efforts to remain in power, the United States continued to provide assistance to the government. Despite their best efforts, however, Nimeiry was overthrown.

The SPLA, however, was unable to reconcile itself with the interim government and refused to take part in the elections that followed, and the war between the separatist movement and the Sudanese government continued to smolder.[156] The SPLA refused to accept anything less than a secular, unified, and democratic Sudan, their stated goals from the beginning of their insurgency.[157] The interim junta and the newly elected government that followed were politically weak, fledging as they were, and the United States viewed their stability as important for the continued stability of the region as a whole.[158] Food aid continued to be sent to Sudan throughout 1986, despite the slackening off of the drought, largely in order to make up for the initial failures of the aid that was sent during the 1984-85 period and to preempt the possibility of future problems, and the United States backed the interim government formally. However, there were other security threats for Sudan than the rebels and Ethiopia. "Sudan prides itself on being the largest country in Africa: today its problems equal its size", a Congressional report on the refugee crisis noted, due

[155] Ibid.

[156] Ibid.

[157] Ibid.

[158] Ethiopia and Sudan one year later: refugee and famine recovery needs, 3.

not only to the famine and rebel movement, but threats of direct military action by outside governments. [159]

The SPLA was being supported not only by Ethiopia, but Libya. Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi was Ethiopia's closest ally in Africa for nearly a decade.[160] Gaddafi was happy to support the SPLA alongside Ethiopia in their efforts to overthrow the Nimeiry regime, and continued to support them even after Nimeiry's overthrow by military forces. Qaddafi had a long history of sponsoring unrest in neighboring nations, especially in coordination with the Soviet Union. In 1980, Qaddafi, at the behest of the Soviets, had intervened in Chad to keep out what both the Libyan leader and Moscow saw as Western attempts to influence the Chadian provisional government. [161]John Garang's writings had successfully impressed Gaddafi personally, securing his assistance in guerilla efforts for the SPLA in southern Sudan.[162] Libya had engaged in repeated terrorist attacks, the most recent at the time of the Congressional report mentioned above in 1986. Libya had long been a thorn in the side of U.S. interests in Northern Africa, and the Reagan administration had, from the outset, been determined to isolate and damage Qaddafi's regime as much as possible to mitigate its ability to destabilize the region, and abroad.[163] The antagonism between the United States and Libya had only served to increase Qaddafi's reliance on and ties to the USSR, who had increasingly provided

[159] Ibid, 4.
[160] Alex De Waal, *Evil Days: Thirty Years of War and Famine in Ethiopia*. (1991) 374-5.
[161] Makinda, *Superpower Diplomacy,* 192.
[162] Kuir Garang, *South Sudan Ideologically: Tribal Socio-Democracy, SPLM Ideologues, Juba Corruptocrats, Khartoum Theocrats and their Time-Frozen Leadership* (2013). 2552 Kindle Edition.
[163] NSDD 168: U.S. Policy Towards North Africa, April 30, 1985.

military and economic assistance to the dictator since Reagan's arrival in the White House.[164]

Qaddafi was responsible for numerous terrorist attacks on Western targets, and the U.S. placed increasingly heavy economic sanctions on Libya, baring Libyan boats from entering U.S. ports and positioning military assets near the coast of the country as a warning.[165] Hoping to isolate Qaddafi, the Reagan administration optimistically yearned for a popular uprising to occur and overthrow the Libyan leader. [166] As of the year that the newly elected government was installed, Sudan was assailed on all sides, and from within. Yet the U.S. government was optimistic, as the famine seemed to be dying down, and the mistakes of the previous year and a half of relief efforts were being corrected. If the lingering issues of famine and the refugee crisis could be successfully mitigated then Sudan would be placed into an acceptably stable position.[167] Unfortunately, the specter of famine would return, as it always does, to haunt the Horn and foil the careful planning of all sides.

In 1987 drought returned once again to the Horn of Africa. Lasting until 1988, this drought was the catalyst for another wide-scale famine that struck the still recovering region. "The tragic events which grip the Horn of Africa and threaten literally millions of lives are, unfortunately, not new concerns for this committee," said Mickey Leland in the

[164] Makinda, Superpower Diplomacy, 192.
[165] NSDD 205: Acting against Libyan Support for International Terrorism, January 8, 1986.
[166] NSDD 234: Libyan Policy, August 16, 1986.
[167] Ethiopia and Sudan one year later: refugee and famine recovery needs, 32.

opening statement of the committee addressing this new famine.[168] Leland was one of the major Congressional advocates for famine relief in Africa during the Reagan administration and a member of previous committees on famines in the Horn that have been referenced. Unlike the 1983-86 famine, however, the international community and the United States was much more prepared to address the disaster. Having gained experience during the 1983-86 crises, the relief efforts were more concerted, and tried to avoid the pitfalls of the previous years that cut deeply into the efficacy of the aid sent. Like the previous famine, the civil strife in both Ethiopia and Sudan was one of the major issues that prevented the free flow of humanitarian relief. SPLA rebels in the southern region of Sudan continued to ambush what aid convoys they could and the Sudanese government purposely rerouted or halted aid sent to or near the southern areas because of fears that the aid would be repurposed by the rebels and help keep the movement alive longer, a reprieve bought with the lives of thousands in the south.[169]

In Ethiopia, a similar sequence of events played out, with Mengistu determined to keep aid being delivered out of the hands of the rebel movements in Eritrea and the Tigray, as a consequence of which, people died from starvation. Indeed, Mengistu actually expelled all international aid workers from the regions of Eritrea and Tigray because he feared that their efforts to provide food to the famine hit communities was helping the rebels.[170] The Reagan administration was vocal in its condemnation of the

[168] Ethiopia and Sudan: warfare, politics, and famine : hearing before the Select Committee on Hunger, House of Representatives, One Hundredth Congress, second session, hearing held in Washington, DC, July 14, 1988. 1.

[169] Deborah Scroggins and Colin Campbell, "Terror and Hunger Spreads as 'Holy War' Rages", *The Atlanta Journal Constitution*. June 27, 1988.

[170] Ethiopia and Sudan [microform] : warfare, politics, and famine : hearing before the Select Committee on Hunger, House of Representatives, One Hundredth Congress, second session, hearing held in Washington, DC, July 14, 1988. 37.

Ethiopian government's efforts to selectively block aid packages, but comparatively silent on Sudan's similar efforts.[171] This was an intentional effort on the part of the administration, who still viewed Sudan as an important ally in the region, and had no desire to begin to admonish it in the public eye.

The administration prepared statements meant to address media reports on these discrepancies, most notably an article published in the Atlanta Journal Constitution that lad out the hypocritical stance of the administration and the problems that Sudan faced due to the rebel movement.[172] The Reagan administration's drafted response was meant to mitigate the awkward stance the administration had taken in order to defend an ally's questionable practices. This position that the Reagan administration found itself in was a byproduct of the larger Cold War considerations that colored the humanitarian relief efforts throughout the entirety of both famines in the Horn.

Given the context of importance that the United States gave to the Horn, and Sudan in particular, it is not surprising that they took an interest in helping ease the famine that had hit the region. As Alexander Poster has suggested, a thesis that this paper agrees with, the Reagan administration was muscled by domestic and international pressures to provide aid to Ethiopia as well. Reagan had no real desire to do this, his reluctance to give direct support to a communist nation was understandable.[173] Indeed, his fear that the vast amounts of aid that were being sent to Ethiopia would help keep the country alive were well founded, as this is exactly what happened. Even then, Reagan's administration attempted to spin this in their favor, as Poster demonstrates, though they

[171] Ibid.
[172] Ibid.
[173] Alexander Poster, 404.

failed to actually complete this task. In the light of the Sudanese famine, the attitude of disdain that the Reagan administration felt towards having to supply aid to the communist nation becomes even more apparent. The purposeful disparity between the attention that the Reagan administration lavished on highlighting the Ethiopian government's failings and similar instances in Sudan strikes a bold contrast. Famine's longer history of destabilization within the region meant that it posed a direct danger to the integrity of the Sudanese government.

If Sudan fell, then one of the most important strategic partners in the Horn would have disappeared. Viewed from within a more strategically oriented framework, the outpouring of support for famine relief in Sudan takes on a much less altruistic caste than people like Wolpe or Leland spoke of. The generosity of the United States was not given solely for the moral reason of helping the hungry, but as a method of keeping an ally alive, and more broadly, keeping American influence alive in a region of increasingly vital importance. The dates of several of the National Security Decision Directives correspond to the rising importance of the Horn in the minds of the United States government; several immediately following the advent of the monolithic humanitarian mission that was created to deal with the disasters in the Horn in 1983-86. As early as 1982, however, the Reagan administration was conceiving of the region as being of importance beyond its borders, a key component of the security of the Persian Gulf and Southwest Asia.[174]

[174] NSDD 57.

By moving beyond Ethiopia allows for a more nuanced understanding of how famine and humanitarian relief were used for ulterior motives. The primary narrative of Ethiopia in the literature, insomuch as the topic has been covered, has meant that the full picture of the Cold War aspect of the famine has been ignored. Additionally, this more complicated picture affects the ways in which the Reagan administration's attitude towards human rights can be understood. The reluctance to acknowledge that Sudan's policies towards the SPLA were hurting its own people, costing lives and, quite tangibly, wasting the tax payers' money, is as revealing as the strident declamations that Reagan made about Ethiopia's own human rights violations. The efforts by Mengistu to forcibly relocate entire village communities in order to better cushion the blows that the famine were dealing his populace was a resounding failure, resulting in the deaths of tens of thousands of people. Mengistu smashed together multiple villages, attempting to consolidate his control, curtailing the rebel's ability to recruit and maneuver, and spread the collectivization of his agricultural sector.[175] In a mirror tragedy, thousands died in southern Sudan as Nimeiry neglected and forcibly blocked aid to prevent rebel cannibalization of his relief supplies. The hypocrisy in not condemning both sides is evident, just as the initial attitude towards famine by the Reagan administration demonstrates the Regan's selective application of human rights morality.

[175] De Waal, *Evil Days*, 3-4.

CHAPTER FIVE: "MAN'S MOST FUNDAMENTAL NEED"

The "hungry, angry…and bitter world" that Cyrus Vance spoke of failed to materialize during or after Carter's presidency, and there were no hordes of starving Third World peoples laying siege to Western nations for bread. While Vance's world did not emerge, the "anguished world" spoken of in the Washington Post articles, the chronic but manageable levels of famine and malnutrition, continue today. Many African nations rely heavily on external sources of food aid to feed their populations; Ethiopia in particular has failed to gain any real ground in tackling hunger within its borders as it alone constitutes nearly a third of all 13 million famine stricken people in East Africa. The addiction to order, to stability, that colored Carter and other Cold War presidents' outlooks, resulted in tactics that had long-term unintended consequences for the stabilizing nations. In the quest to maintain a positive image and promote order abroad, the United States failed to fully comprehend the kind of aid being sent out, absorbed as it was by Cold War considerations and maintaining a "flexible" style of human rights. Lost in the cracks of that flexibility were nations like Ethiopia, who is now entirely reliant on foreign food aid and in a very real sense, addicted.

Today, the Horn of Africa is still one of the largest recipients of aid in the world, and currently receives the majority of aid sent to relieve famine on the continent.[176] The motto so often trumpeted by the Reagan administration of "a hungry child knows no politics" is sorely undermined by the actual actions and motivations of the Reagan

[176] Aschale Dagnachews Siyoum, Dorothea Hilhorst, Gerrit-Jan Van Uffelen. "Food Aid and Dependency Syndrome in Ethiopia: Local Perceptions". *Journal of Humanitarian Assistance* (2012). http://sites.tufts.edu/jha/archives/1754

[176] Soloman Asfaw, Mulubrhan Amare, German Calfat. *Food Aid and Rural Poverty in Ethiopia* http://www.csae.ox.ac.uk/conferences/2011-EdiA/papers/305-Asfaw.pdf

administration in tackling the famine in the Horn of Africa. Similar issues continue to face not only the Horn in the present day, but other areas of the world stricken by humanitarian disasters. The problems that the Reagan administration faced then are, in many regards, the same ones that the world faces today, and the same attitude that the Reagan administration had towards humanitarian relief is one that the world is trying to slowly grow out of. Although the Cold War is no longer the umbrella threat of the moment, security concerns still plague the area, as terrorism has replaced the Cold War as the dominant security problem for the United States. The approaches that the Reagan administration took towards addressing famine are the ones that the world, and the West in particular, are

An Oxfam report in 1985 argued that "the crisis does not stop when Western food aid arrives…if short term handouts are all we will give, we are merely postponing famines inevitable return."[177] This projection towards the future played out. The aid sent during the first famine in the 1980s did little to prevent the occurrence of a second barely a year after the initial one ended. Aid sent by Western countries was, and continues to be, sent out in the vague hope that by tossing enough assistance at problems that they will simply go away by dent of the amount of aid sent. Unfortunately, the longer standing issues that plague regions like the Horn are not so easily fixed. The "roots of famine" were a complex web of short term decisions by policy makers of both Sudan and the United States, and much longer standing and systemic issues like the cyclical nature of drought in the Horn.[178] The efforts of outside governments were, and still are, often not

[177]Cater, *The Roots of Famine*
[178] Ibid. 34

truly aware of the local context. It is easy for governments like the United States to send over millions of dollars and thousands upon thousands of tons of humanitarian relief to countries in need, but these are short term solutions to problems that have crested only recently.

More complex solutions require a greater investment of time, effort, and monetary value than governments, like the United States, are willing to provide easily. It was not only simpler for the Carter and Reagan administrations to simply toss out huge amounts of relief to the Horn of Africa, it was an appealing thing to do as well. The public appreciated and more easily understood the idea that we, the United States, were sending huge shipments of grain to people who were starving. It was far more complicated to communicate to people that rural Sudanese and Ethiopian communities needed better designed boreholes for irrigation, because the ones that were being used were fueling over-grazing and feeding into a larger cycle of desertification that was exacerbating the drought and, ultimately, feeding into the famine in the first place. Such complex issues did not easily enter into the minds of the American people then and still, to this day, do not. A multimedia extravaganza about hunger relief like the Live Aid Concert in 1985, full of the popular heartthrob celebrities of America at the time, was something that was infinitely more relatable to the average citizen of the United States. If Western governments are to continue to spend large amounts of money on relief efforts, they need to be better able to communicate the intricate nature of humanitarian aid, despite the fact that over simplification is appealing not only to the public, but the governments that derive their support from that public. A “hungry child” is relatable, and the removal of something complex and crass, like “politics” from the media equation. It was, and still is,

a sign of the somewhat carefree attitude that the United States government takes towards providing humanitarian relief. An attitude that seem to say, paradoxically, that the "fundamental need" spoken of by Kissinger years before was less about helping others and more about benefiting the United States.[179]

[179] Henry Kissinger, Address to World Food Congress on November 5, 1974. http://www.fordlibrarymuseum.gov/library/document/dosb/1851.pdf#page=3

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

Foreign Relations of the United States, 1977-1980, Volume I: Foundations of Foreign Policy

Foreign Relations of the United States, 1977–1980, Volume II: Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs: *World Hungry and Food Policy*

Foreign Relations of the United States, 1977–1980, Volume II: Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs: *International Health, Population Growth, and Women's Issues*

Foreign Relations of the United States, 1977-1980, Volume III: Foreign Economic Policy

Foreign Relations of the United States, 1977-1980, Volume VI: Soviet Union

Jet. "Idi Amin Defends Himself at Afro-Arab Summit Talks". March 24, 1977

Jet. "Young Can't See U.S. Troops in Black Africa". March 24, 1977.

The American Presidency Project. http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=24605

Government Documents: Congressional

Minority Staff Report for the Subcommittee on Immigration and Refugee Policy, "Ethiopia and Sudan One Year Later: Refugee and Famine Recovery Needs" (1986).

Subcommittee on Africa, for the Committee on Foreign Affairs, "Emergency Famine Relief Needs in Ethiopia and Sudan" (1986).

Hearing before the Committees on Human Rights, International Organization, and on Africa for the Committee on Foreign Affairs, "Update on Recent Developments in Ethiopia: The Famine Crisis" (1988).

Briefing and Markup to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, "African Famine Situation" (1985).

Government Documents: National Security Council Decision Directives

NSDD 3-86 United States Support for Economic Growth in Sub-Saharan Africa 09/19/1986

NSDD 156 United States Third World Food Aid: A "Food for Progress" Program, 01/03/1985

NSDD 143 United States Third World Hunger Relief: Emergency Assistance, 07/09/1984

NSDD 1-84 United States Third World Hunger Relief, 02/27/1984

NSDD 47 Emergency Mobilization Preparedness, 07/22/1982

NSDD 167 Food for Progress Program Implementation, 04/29/1985

NSDD 27 Economic Decisions for Libya, 03/09/1982

NSDD 321 Disposition of National Security Decision Directives, 12/02/1988

NSDD 139 Measures to Improve United States Posture and Readiness to Respond to Developments in the Iran-Iraq War, 04/05/1984

NSSD 4-85 United States Arms Transfer Policy for the Middle East, 02/06/1985

NSSD 8-82 United States Strategy towards the Horn of Africa, 04/12/1982

NSDD 57 United States Policy towards the Horn of Africa, 09/17/1982

NSDD 14 Security Considerations in Egypt and Sudan, 10/08/1981

Reagan Library Resources

Africa Watch Report. "Denying the "Honor of Living" Sudan: A Human Rights Disaster."

Washington DC: The Africa Watch Committee, 1990.

Countries (CO)

CO049 Ethiopia, Boxes 71-72

CO148 Sudan, Box 178

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

"Famine, a Manmade Disaster?" A Report for the Independent Commission on International Humanitarian Issues. (1985).

Nick Cater, "The Roots of Famine". A Report for Oxfam (1986).

Memoirs

Dawit, Wolde Giorgis, *Red Tears: War, Famine, and Revolution in Ethiopia* (1988)

Secondary Sources

Monographs and Reports

Adamishin, Anatoly, and Schifter, Richard. *Human Rights, Perestroika, and the End of the Cold War* (Washington, DC, 2009).

Ahlberg, Kristin. *Transplanting the Great Society: Lyndon Johnson and Food for Peace* (2008).

Apodaca, Clair. *Understanding U.S. Human Rights Policy: A Paradoxical Legacy* (New York, 2006)

Aschale Dagnachews Siyoum, Dorothea Hilhorst, Gerrit-Jan Van Uffelen. Food Aid and Dependency Syndrome in Ethiopia: Local Perceptions. Journal of Humanitarian Assistance (2012). http://sites.tufts.edu/jha/archives/1754

Berry, Leonard; Downing, Jeanne; Downing, Lesley; Downing, Thomas E.; and Ford, Richard. *Drought and Famine in Ethiopia: U.S. Response*

Black, Erin. *One of the Most Vexing Problems in American Foreign Relations: The Senate Foreign Relations Committee's Consideration of the Aid Program* c. 1960s (2007)

Bon Tempo, Carl J. "From the Center-Right: Freedom House and Human Rights in the 1970s and 1980s," in The Human Rights Revolution, eds. Iriye, Goedde, and Hitchcock

Borgwardt, Elizabeth. *A New Deal For the World: America's Vision for Human Rights.* Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005.

Borstelmann, Thomas. *The Cold War and the Color Line: American Race Relations in the Global Arena*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003.

Crocker, Chester. *Managing Global Chaos: Sources and Responses to International Conflict* (1996)

Cullather, Nick. *The Hungry World* (2010).

Cullather, Nick. *The Hungry World: America's Cold War Battle against Poverty in Asia (Cambridge, MA, 2010)*

De Waal, Alexander. *Evil Days: 30 Years of War and Famine in Ethiopia. African Watch Report* (1991)

De Waal, Alexander. *Famine that Kills: Darfur, Sudan 1984-1985*. (1989)

Ferguson, Niall, et al. *The Shock of the Global: The1970s in Perspective* (Cambridge, MA, 2010).

Garang, John. *The Call For Democracy in Sudan: John Garang Speaks*. Edited by Mansour

Gebru Tareke. "The Ethiopia-Somalia War of 1977 Revisited." *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 3 (2000)

Glendon, Mary Ann. *A World Made New: Eleanor Roosevelt and the Universal Declarationof Human Rights (New York, 2001)*

Gliejeses *Visions of Freedom: Havana, Washington, Pretoria, and the Struggle for Southern Africa, 1976-1991*. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2013.

Grossman, Atina. "Grams, Calories, and Food: Languages of Victimization, Entitlement, and Human Rights in Occupied Germany, 1945–1949," in *The Human Rights Revolution*, eds. Iriye, Goedde, and Hitchcock.

Heiden, David. *Dust to Dust: A Doctor's View of Famine in Africa* (1992).

Hogan, Michael. *The Marshall Plan: America, Britain, and the Reconstruction of Western Europe* (1987)

Irwin, Julia. *Making the World Safe: The American Red Cross and a Nation's Humanitarian Awakening*. (2013).

Jamieson, Dale. *Duties to the Distant: Aid, Assistance, and Intervention in the Developing World*

Jasson, Kurt, *The Ethiopian Famine* (1987).

Katz, Michael. *The Price of Citizenship*. (2001), 299-300.

Kaufman, Burton I. *Trade and Aid: Eisenhower's Foreign Policy, 1953-1961*. (1982).

Keys, Barbara J. *Reclaiming American Virtue: The Human Rights Revolution of the 1970s.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014.

Korn, David A. *Ethiopia, the United States and the Soviet Union* (1986).

Latham, Michael E. *The Right Kind of Revolution: Modernization, Development, and U.S. Foreign Policy from the Cold War to the Present*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011.

Lefebvre, Jeffery A. *Arms for the Horn: U.S. Security Policy in Ethiopia and Somalia, 1953–1991* (1991).

Lofche, Michael F. *Africa's Agricultural Crisis: An Overview.* In Africa's Agrarian Crisis: The Roots of Famine, ed. by Stephen K. Corumins, Michael F. Lofchie, and Rhys Payne. (1986).

Makinda, Samuel M., *Superpower Diplomacy in the Horn of Africa* (1986)

Natsios, Andrew S. *U.S. Foreign policy and the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse: Humanitarian Relief in Complex Emergencies* (1997).

Oxfam, "Desperate Times: War and Famine in Sudan", Oxfam Publications (1998).

Patman, Roger G. *The Soviet Union in the Horn of Africa: The Diplomacy of Intervention and Disengagement* (Cambridge, 2009).

Patterson, James. *America's Struggle Against Poverty in the Twentieth Century*. (2000)

Poster, Alexander. "A Hierarchy of Survival: The United States and the Negotiation of International Disaster Relief, 1981-1989" (dissertation, Ohio State University, 2010).

Preston, Andrew. *Sword of the Spirit, Shield of Faith: Religion in American War and Diplomacy* (New York, 2012).

Richard Ullman. "Human Rights and Economic Power: The United States Versus Idi Amin". *Foreign Affairs* (1978). http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/29141/richard-h-ullman/human-rights-and-economic-power-the-united-states-versus-idi-ami

Schmitz, David F. *The United States and Right-Wing Dictator-ships, 1965–1989* (Cambridge, UK, 2006).

Schmitz, David F., and Vanessa Walker. "Jimmy Carter and the Foreign Policy of Human Rights: The Development of a Post-Cold War Foreign Policy." Diplomatic History 28, no. 1 (January 2004)

Sen Amartya. *Food Entitlements and Economic Chains: Hunger, Entitlement and Linkages.* In Hunger in History: Food Shortages, Poverty and Deprivation, ed. by Lucile F. Newman (1990).

Sen, Amartya. *Poverty and Famines: an Essay on Entitlement and Deprivation* (1981).

Smith, Gaddis. *Morality, Reason, and Power: American Diplomacy in the Carter Years*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1986.

Snyder, Sarah B. *Human Rights Activism and the End of the Cold War* (2013)."

Snyder, Sarah. *Human Rights Activism and the End of the Cold War* (Cambridge, 2013)

Soloman Asfaw, Mulubrhan Amare, German Calfat. Food Aid and Rural Poverty in Ethiopia http://www.csae.ox.ac.uk/conferences/2011-EdiA/papers/305-Asfaw.pdf

Strong, Robert A. *Working in the World: Jimmy Carter and the Making of American Foreign Policy*. Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 2000.

Toklu, Tesfaye; Von Braum, Joachim; & Zaki, Elsayed. "Drought and Famine Relationships in Sudan: Policy Implications", Research Report 88 International Food Policy Institute (1991).

Varnis, Steven L. *Reluctant Aid or Aiding the Reluctant?: U.S. Food Policy and Ethiopian Famine Relief* (1990)

Vaux, Anthony. *The Selfish Altruist: Relief Work in Famine and War* (2001).

Westad, Odd Arne. *The Global Cold War*. (2005).

Westad, Odd Arne. The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Zunz, Olivier. *Philanthropy in America: A History* (2011).

Articles

Delany, Matthew J. "John Garang and Sudanism: A Peculiar and Resilient Nationalist Ideology,"

Keys, Barbara. "Congress, Kissinger, and the Origins of Human Rights Diplomacy," Diplomatic History 34: 5 (November 2010)

Poster, Alexander. (2012), "The Gentle War: Famine Relief, Politics, and Privatization in Ethiopia, 1983–1986". Diplomatic History, 36: 399–425

Schraeder. The Horn of Africa: US Foreign Policy in an Altered Cold War Environment. *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 46, No. 4 (Autumn, 1992), pp. 571-593.

Snyder, Sarah B. "The Defeat of Ernest Lefever's Nomination: Keeping Human Rights on the United States Foreign Policy Agenda," in Challenging U.S. Foreign Policy: America and the World in the Long Twentieth Century, eds. Bevan Sewell and Scott Lucas (Basingstoke, UK, 2011)

VITA

Place of Birth: born in Plano, Texas

Educational Institutions: University of Kentucky, Bachelors of Arts, 2014

Professional Positions Held: Teaching Assistant

Scholastic Honors: Holman Hamilton Fellowship, Spring 2014

Signature: Christian Tyler Ruth